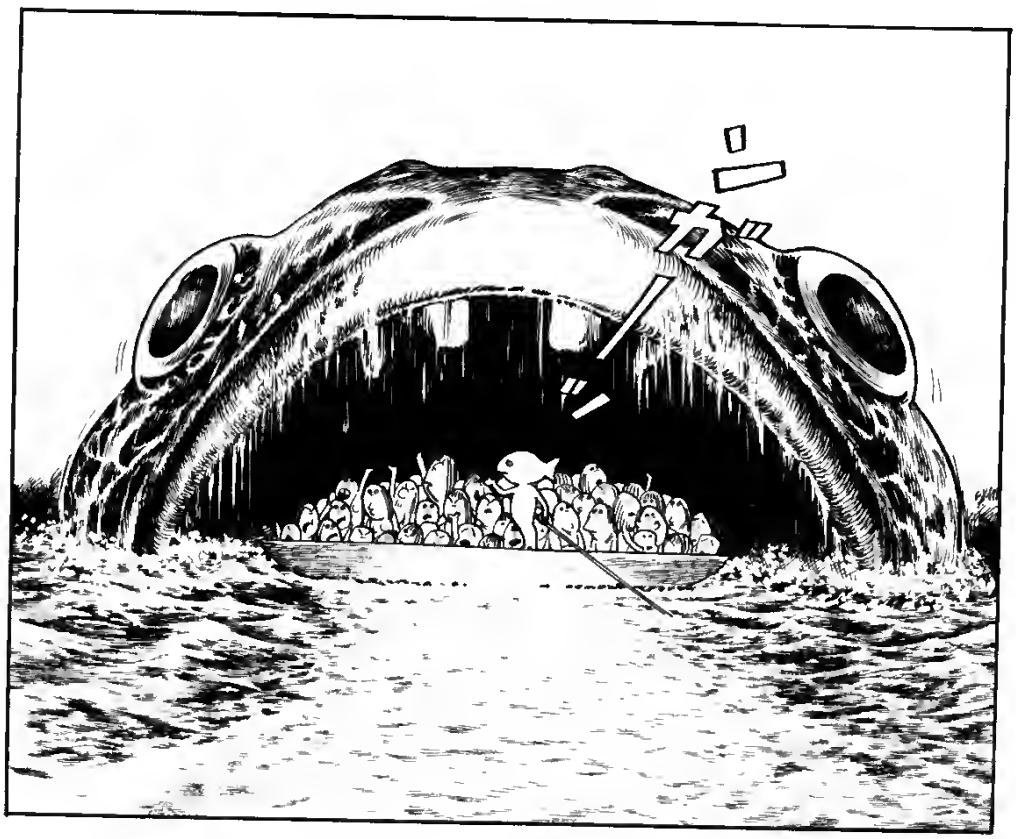
Shigeru Mizuki

MYSTÈRES



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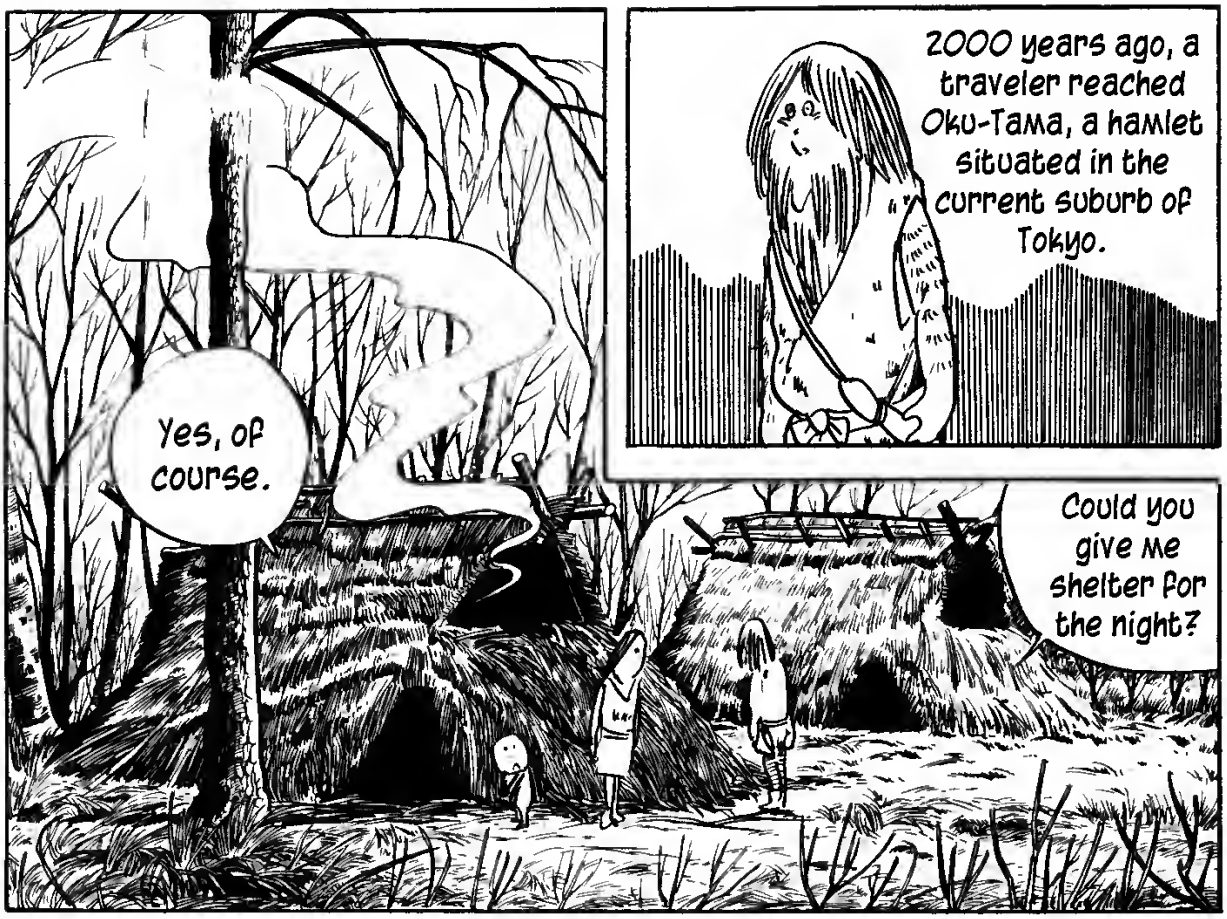
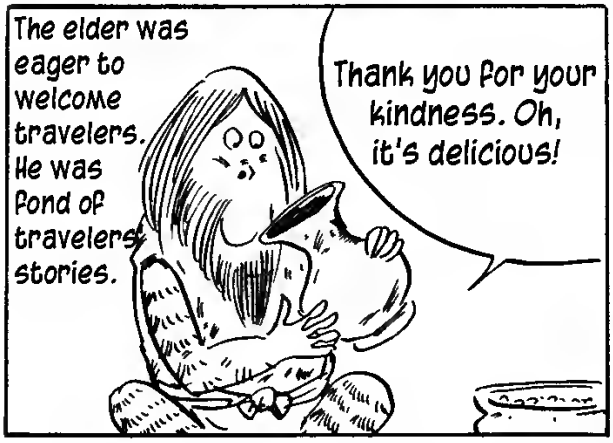
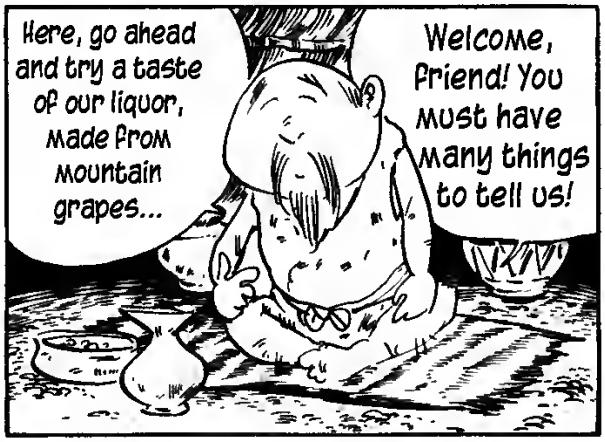
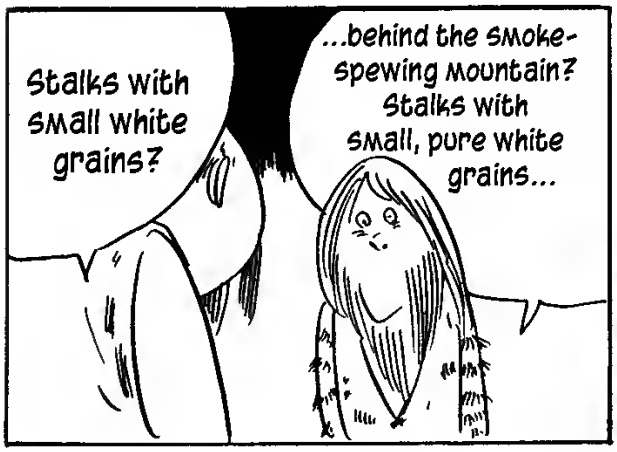
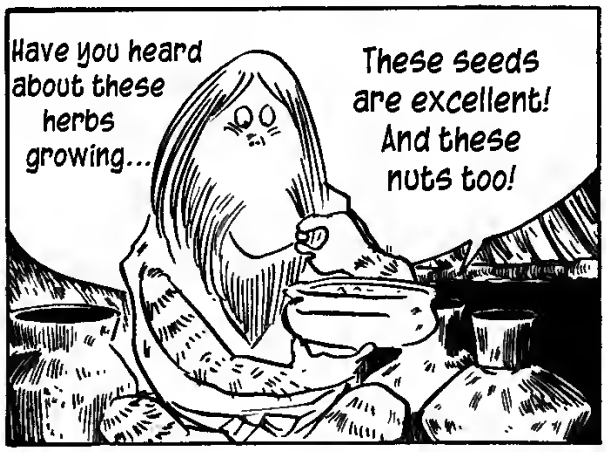
The first grains of rice

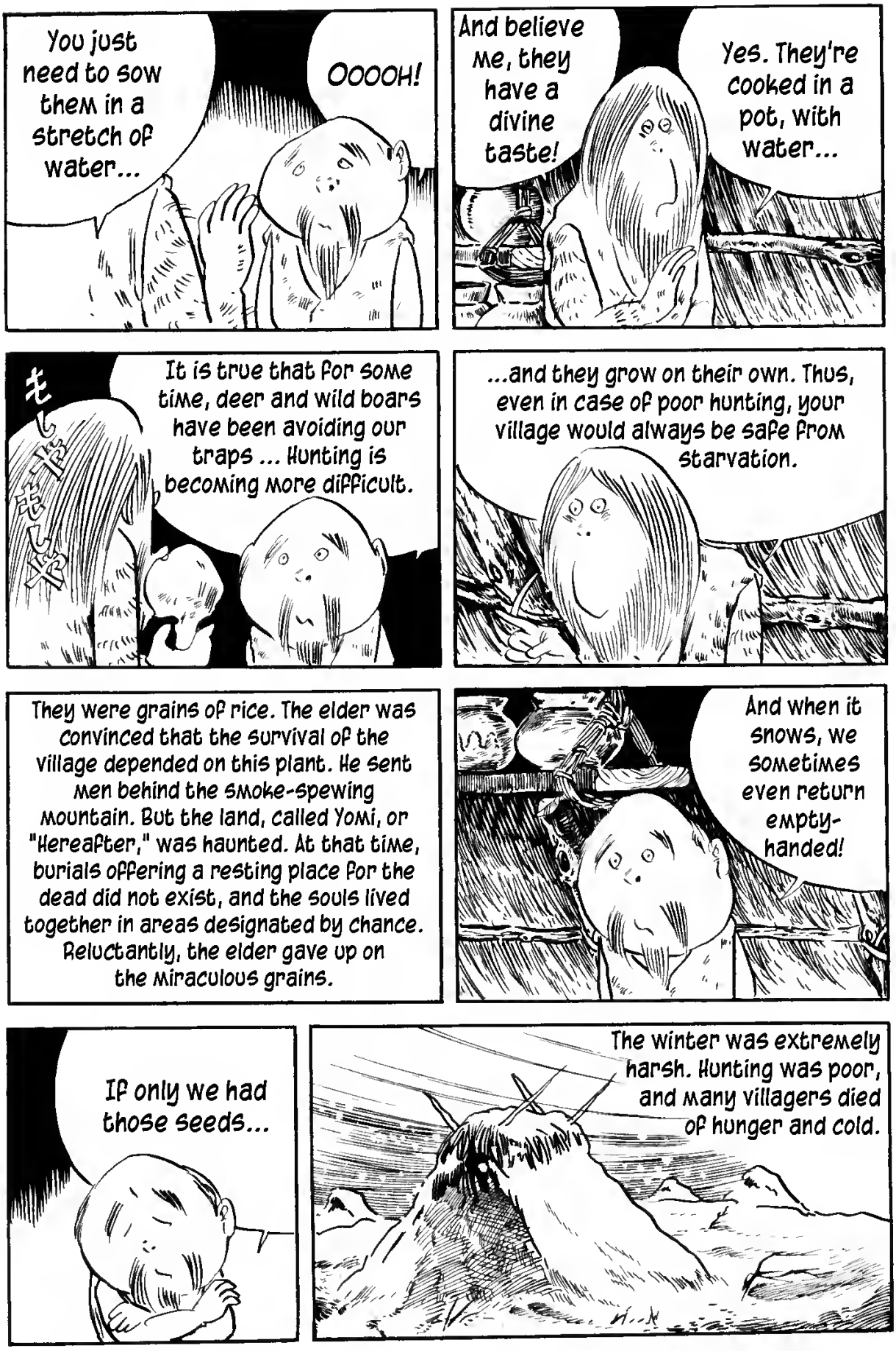

2000 years ago, a traveler reached Oku-Tama, a hamlet situated in the current suburb of Tokyo.
Could you give me shelter for the night?
Yes, of course.

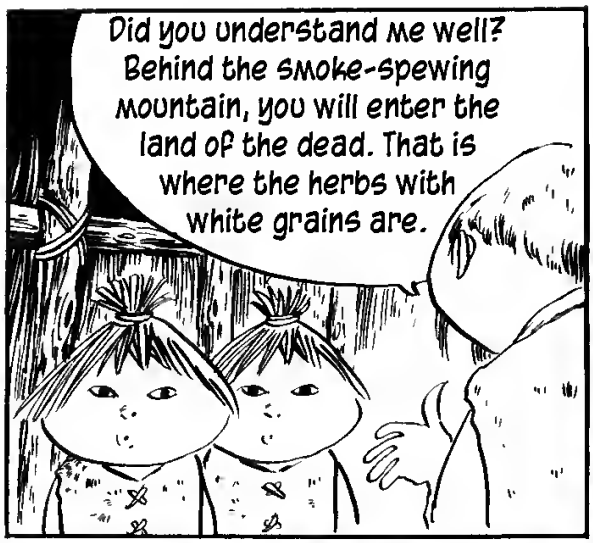

The elder was eager to welcome travelers. He was fond of travelers' stories.
Thank you for your kindness. Oh, it's delicious!

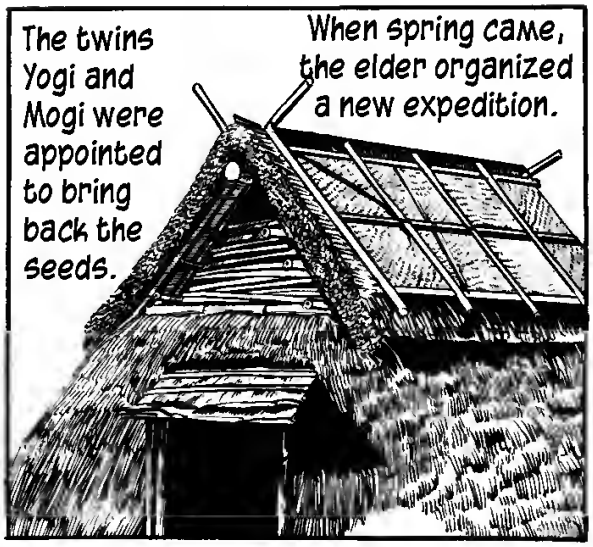

Here, go ahead and try a taste of our liquor, made from mountain grapes...
Welcome, friend! You must have many things to tell us!

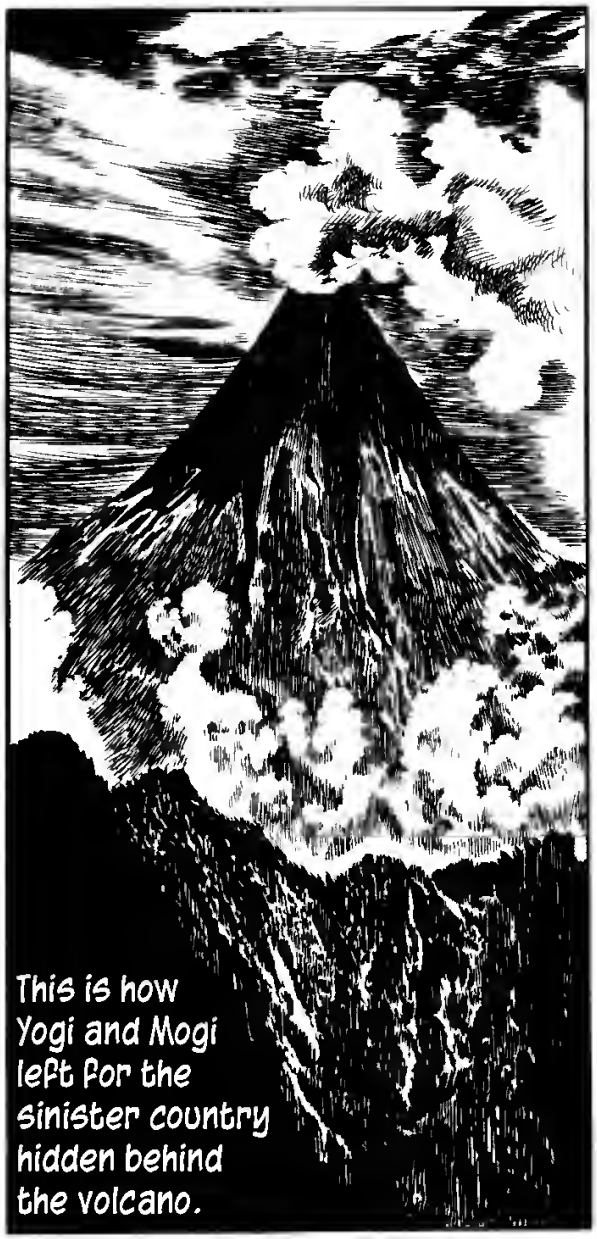

Stalks with small white grains?
...behind the smoke-spewing mountain? Stalks with small, pure white grains...

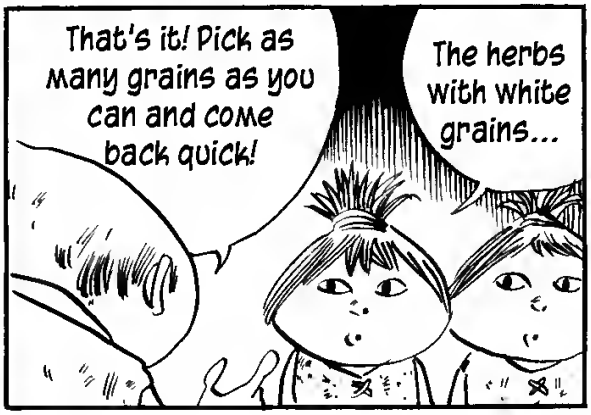

Have you heard about these herbs growing...
These seeds are excellent! And these nuts too!

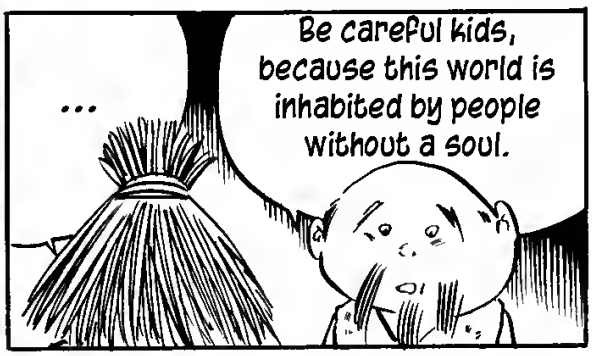

You just need to sow them in a stretch of water...
OOOOH!
And believe me, they have a divine taste!
Yes. They're cooked in a pot, with water...
It is true that for some time, deer and wild boars have been avoiding our traps ... Hunting is becoming more difficult.
...and they grow on their own. Thus, even in case of poor hunting, your village would always be safe from starvation.
They were grains of rice. The elder was convinced that the survival of the village depended on this plant. He sent men behind the smoke-spewing mountain. But the land, called Yomi, or "Hereafter," was haunted. At that time, burials offering a resting place for the dead did not exist, and the souls lived together in areas designated by chance. Reluctantly, the elder gave up on the miraculous grains.
And when it snows, we sometimes even return empty-handed!
If only we had those seeds...
The winter was extremely harsh. Hunting was poor, and many villagers died of hunger and cold.

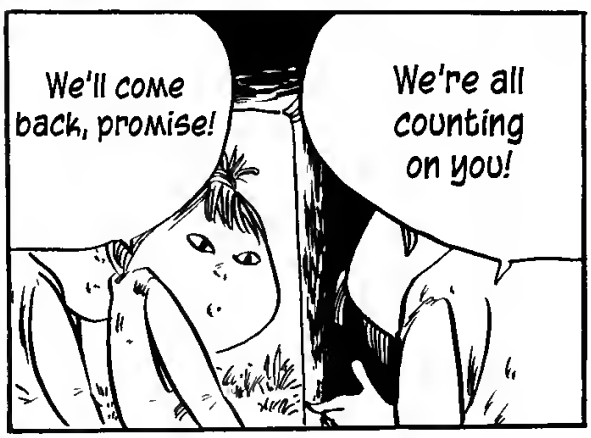

Did you understand me well? Behind the smoke-spewing mountain, you will enter the land of the dead. That is where the herbs with white grains are.

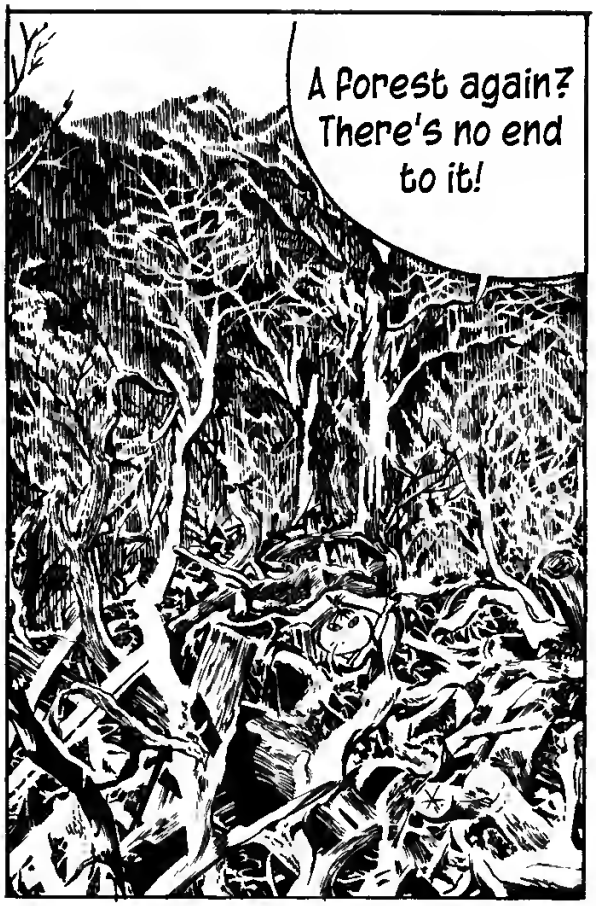

The twins Yogi and Mogi were appointed to bring back the seeds.
When spring came, the elder organized a new expedition.


This is how Yogi and Mogi left for the sinister country hidden behind the volcano.


That's it! Pick as many grains as you can and come back quick!
The herbs with white grains...

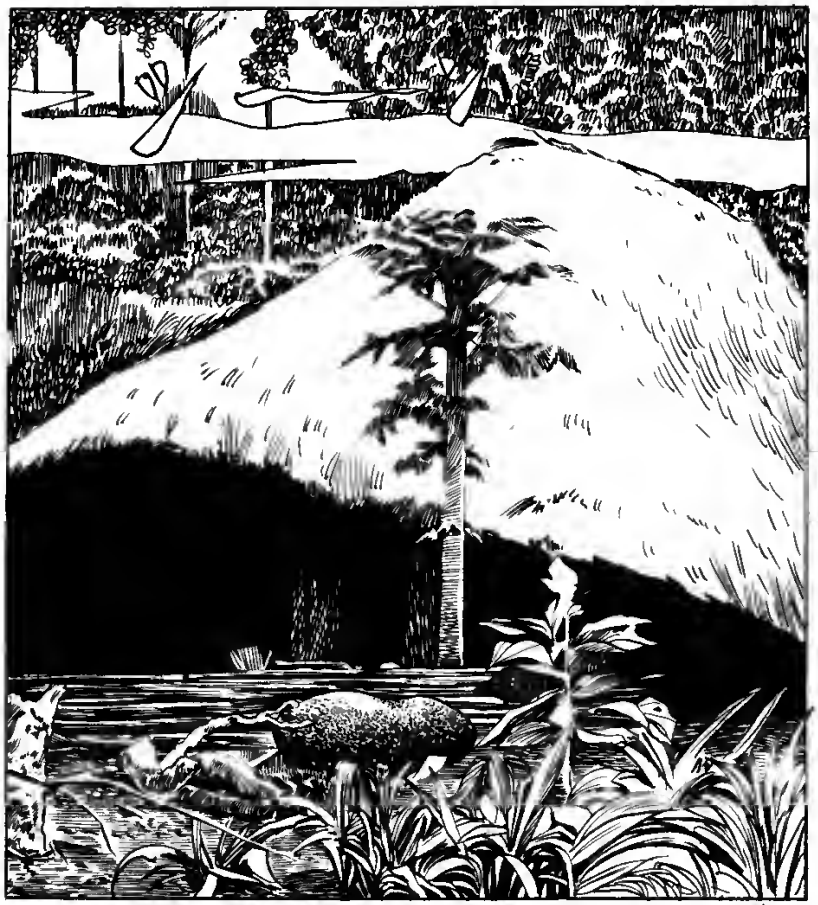

...
Be careful kids, because this world is inhabited by people without a soul.


We'll come back, promise!
We're all counting on you!


A forest again? There's no end to it!

The twins walked for days and months on a dark mountain devoid of any trail.

Crows... We must be close to Yomi's country.
カアー
カアー
カアー
カアー
Croaaa croaaa
Croaaa croaaa
Look, it's here! Let's go, but without getting noticed.



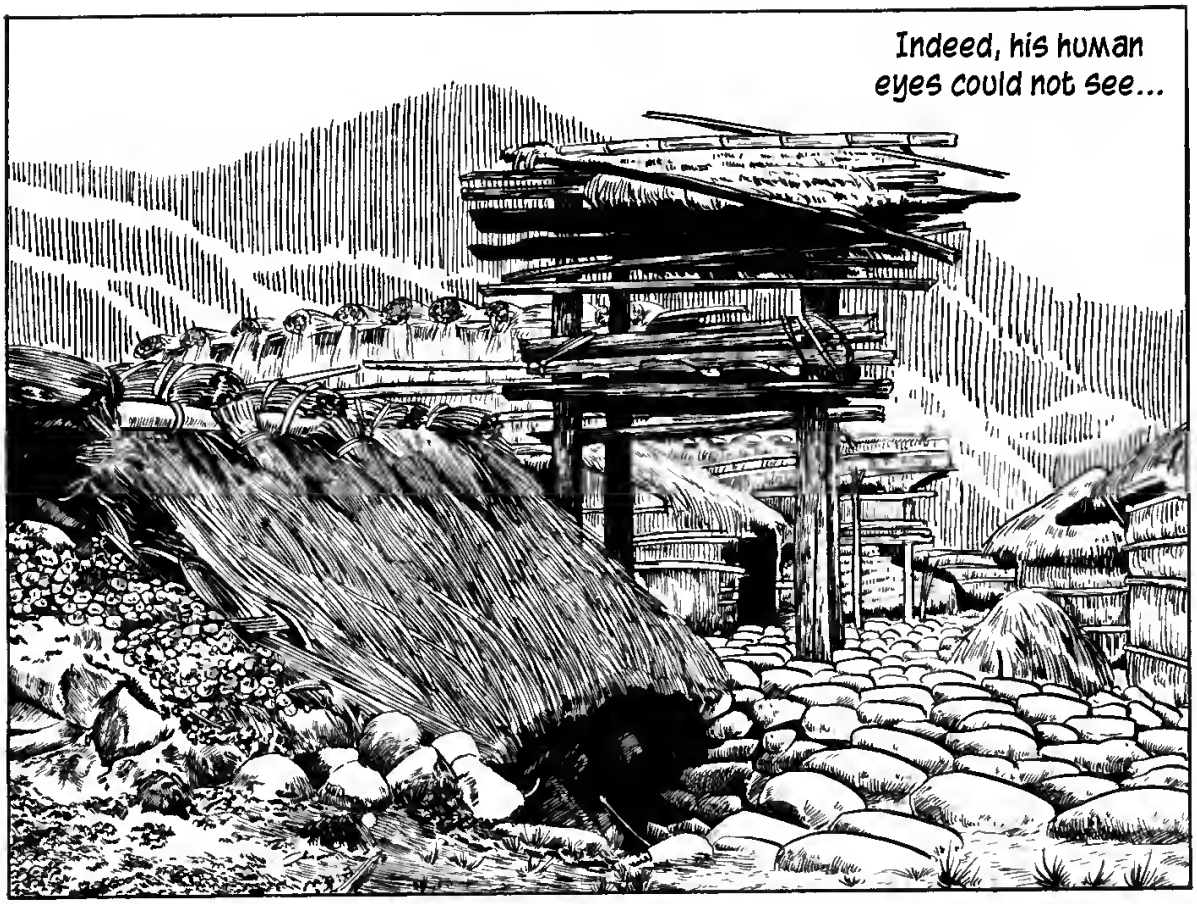
Yogi, let me go down first. You stay hidden in the thicket and watch what happens, okay?

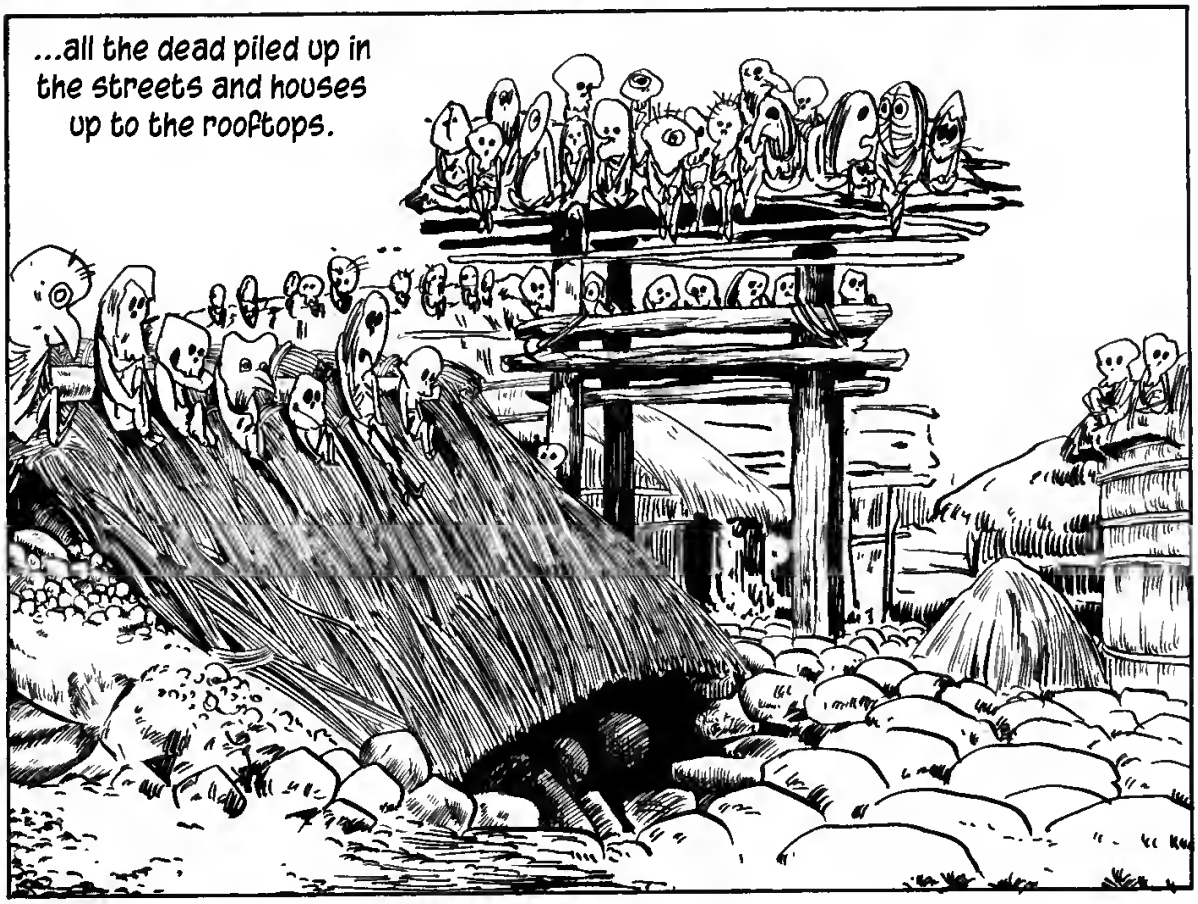
Let's be careful, you never know...

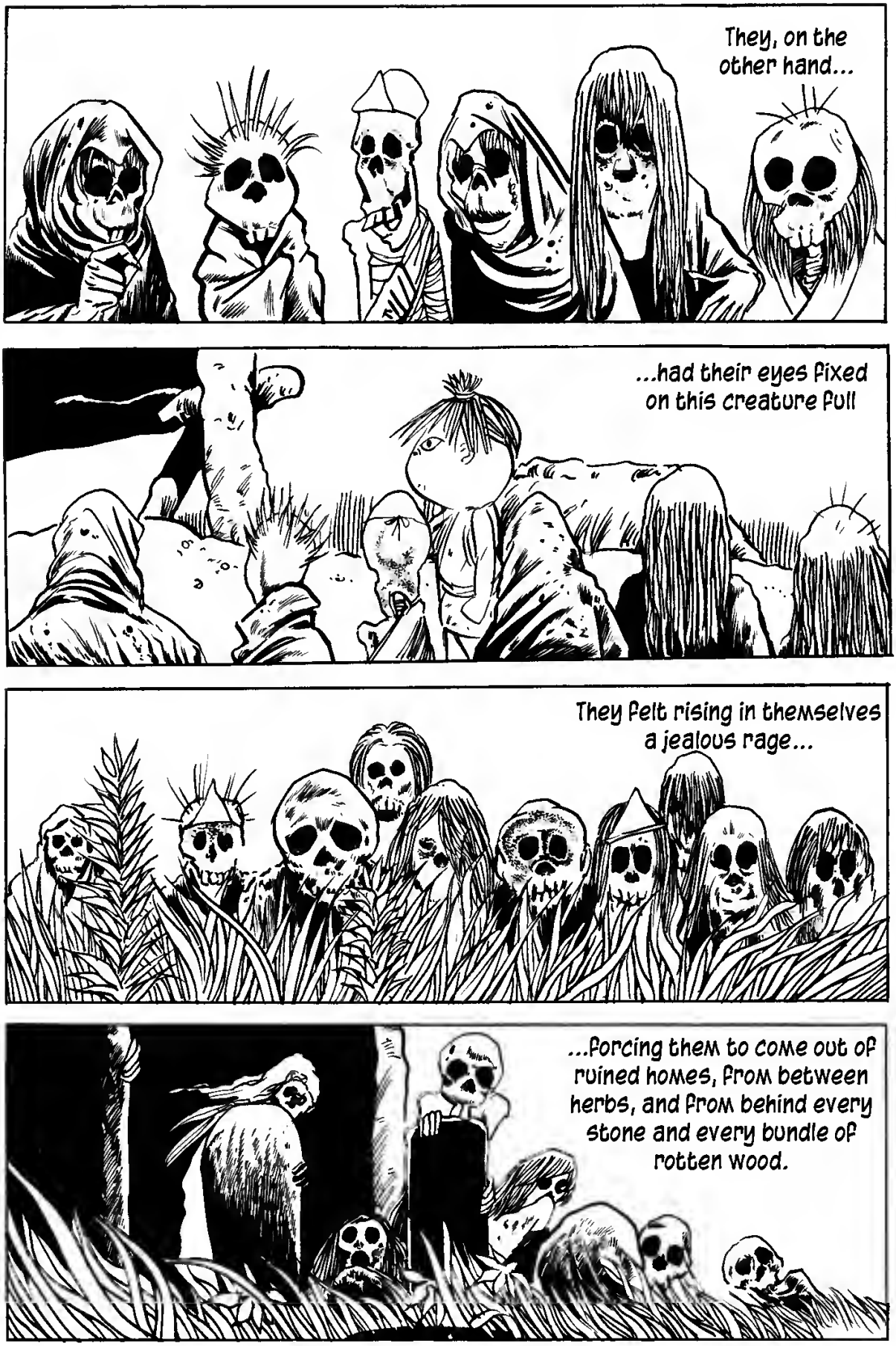
Yes

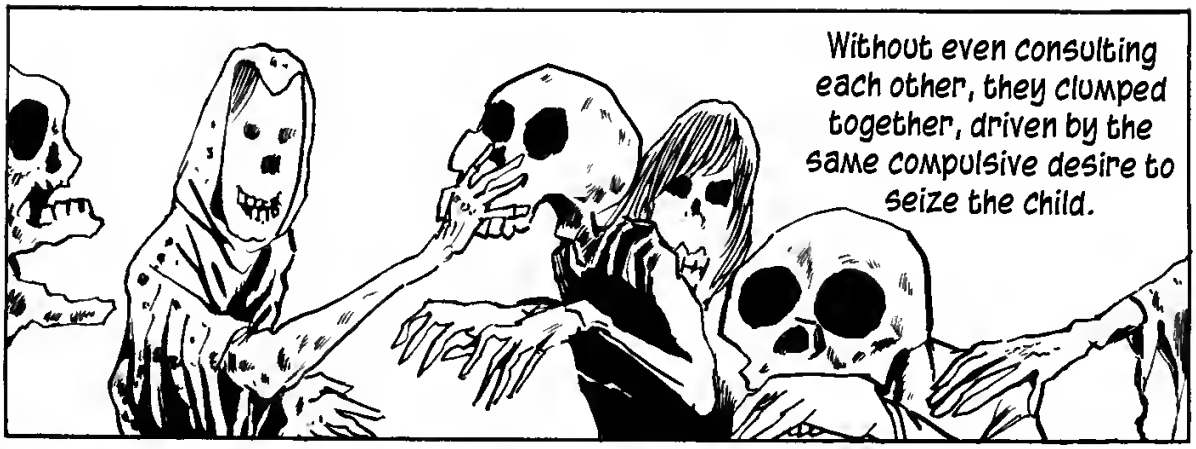
Silence

Absolute silence reigned supreme around the village. On the way, Mogi didn't meet anyone.

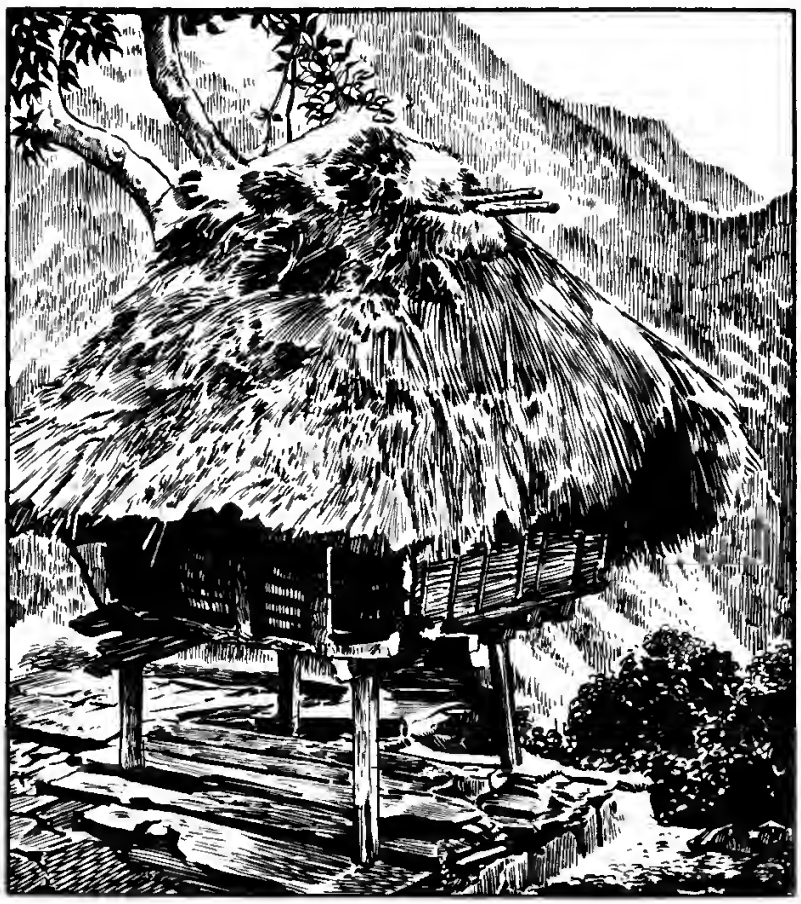

Indeed, his human eyes could not see...

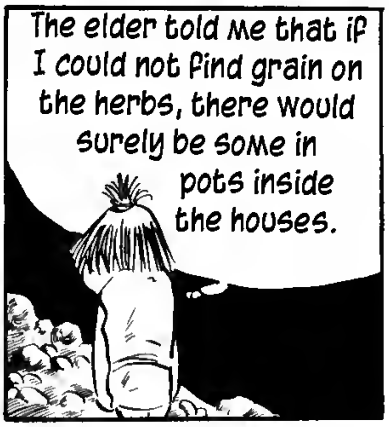

...all the dead piled up in the streets and houses up to the rooftops.


They, on the other hand...
...had their eyes fixed on this creature full
They felt rising in themselves a jealous rage...
...forcing them to come out of ruined homes, from between herbs, and from behind every stone and every bundle of rotten wood.


Without even consulting each other, they clumped together, driven by the same compulsive desire to seize the child.

Mogi found some herbs in the pond located below, but none had white grain.



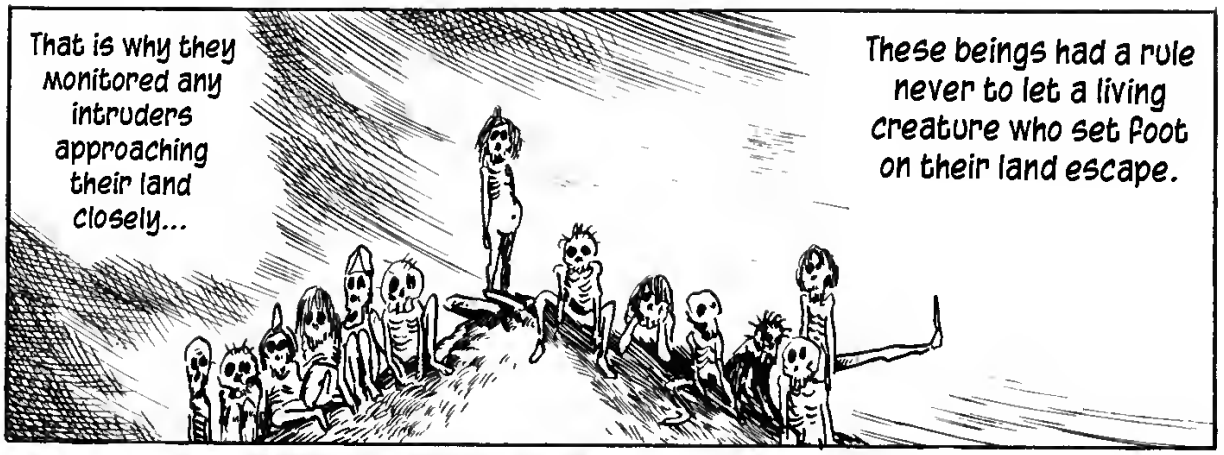

The elder told me that if I could not find grain on the herbs, there would surely be some in pots inside the houses.

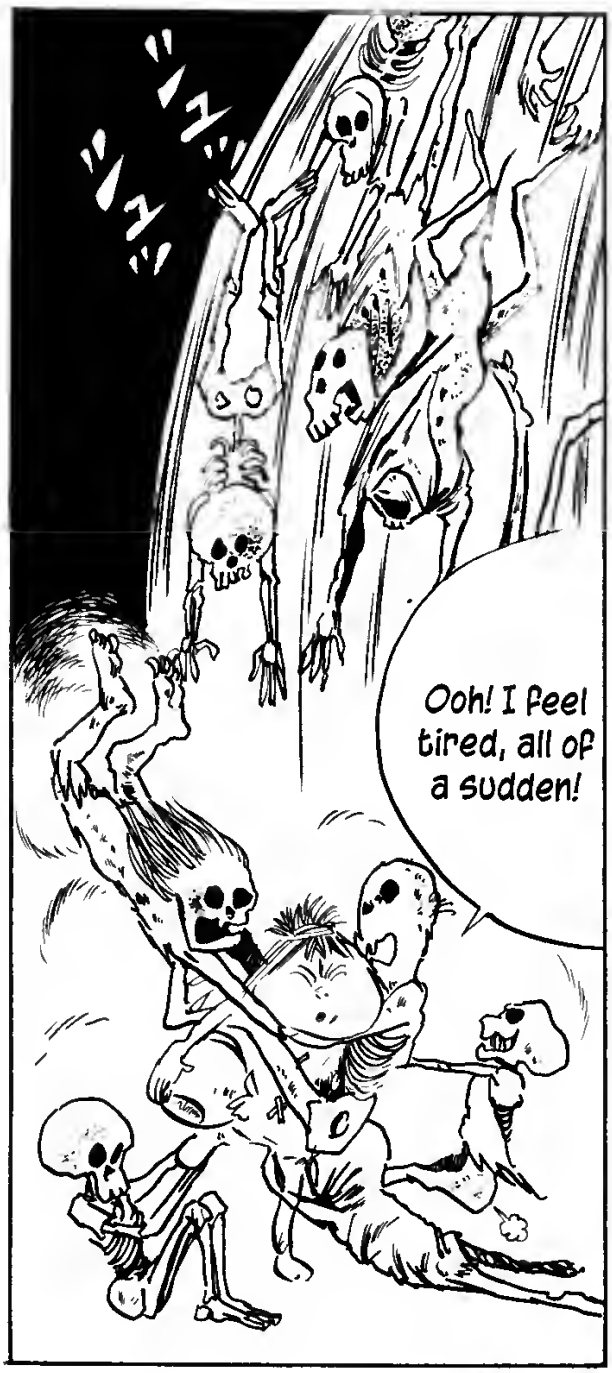
Here's one of them!

In the end, it was easy...

Here, some pots!!

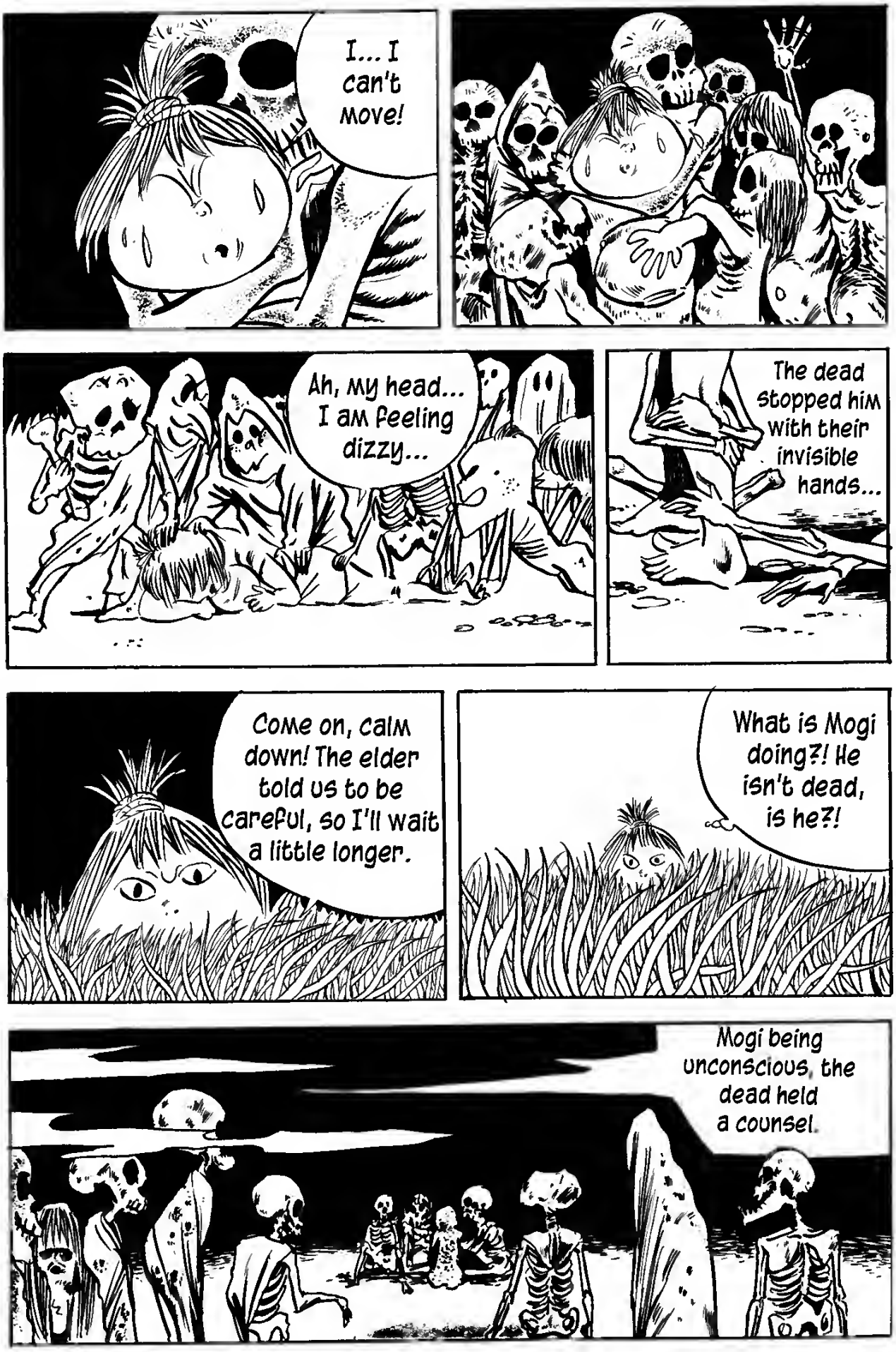
However, more and more of the dead crowded the village gate.

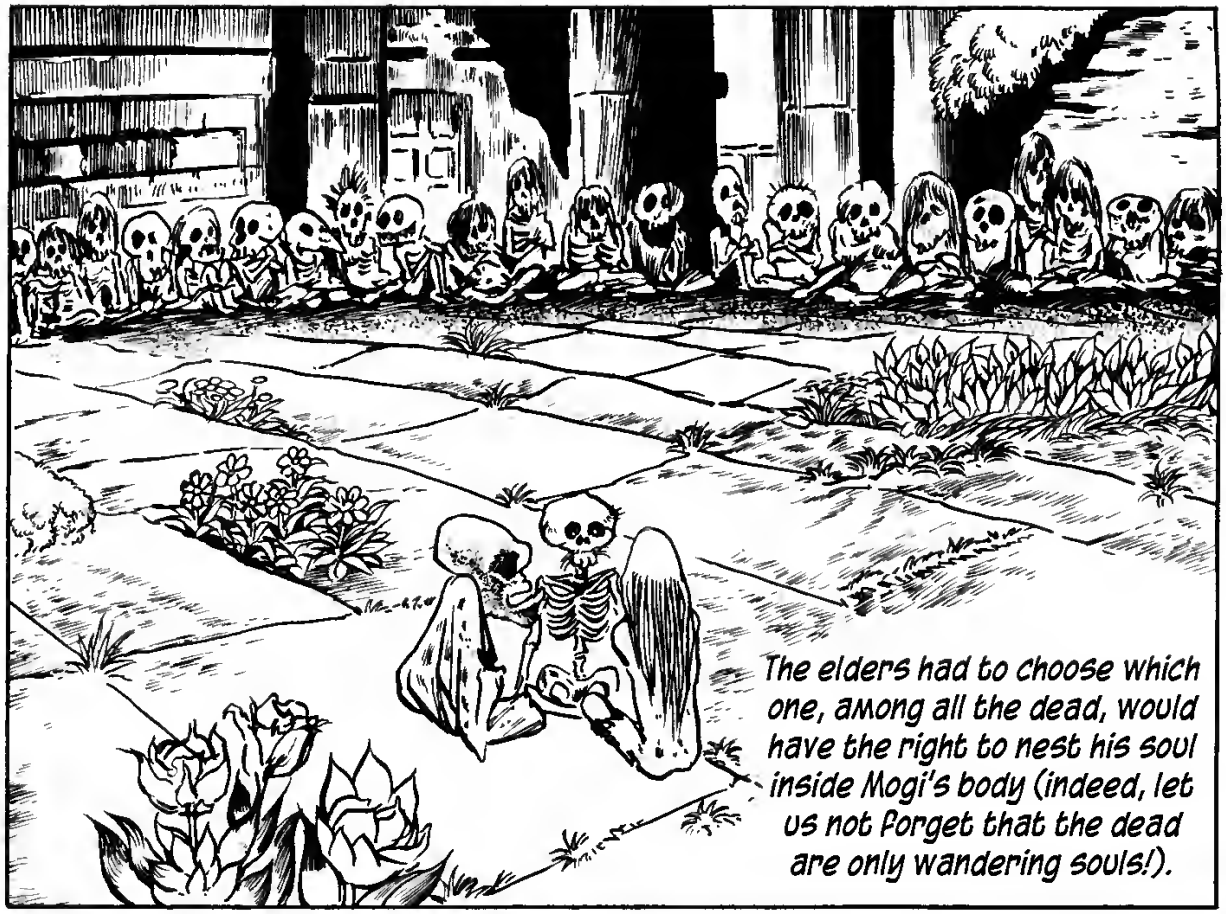

That is why they monitored any intruders approaching their land closely...
These beings had a rule never to let a living creature who set foot on their land escape.

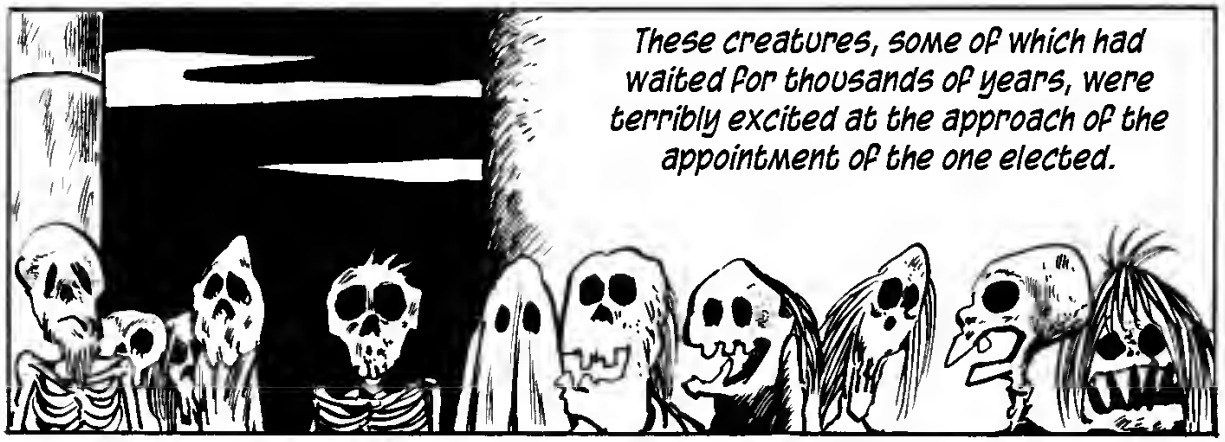


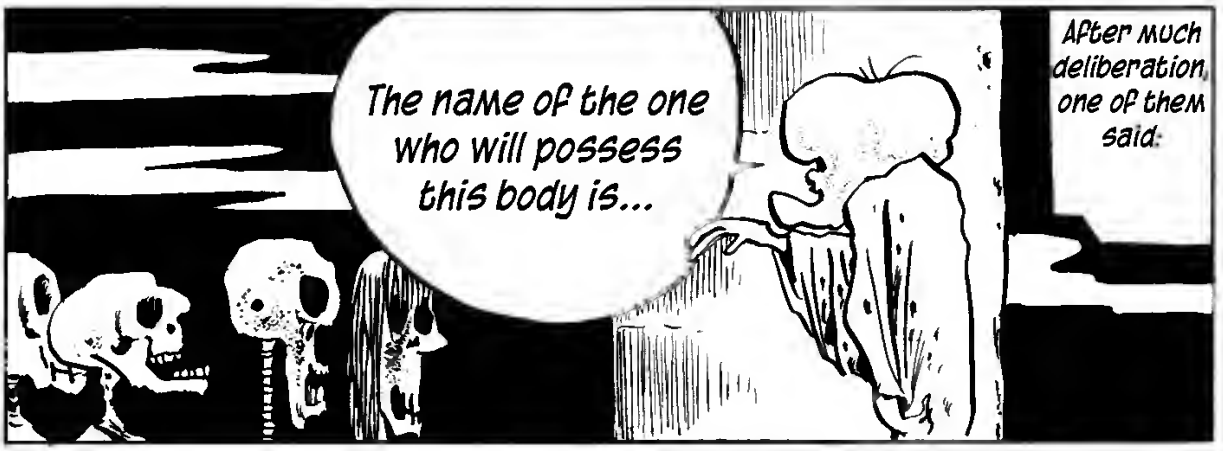
Fiuf fiuf fiuf

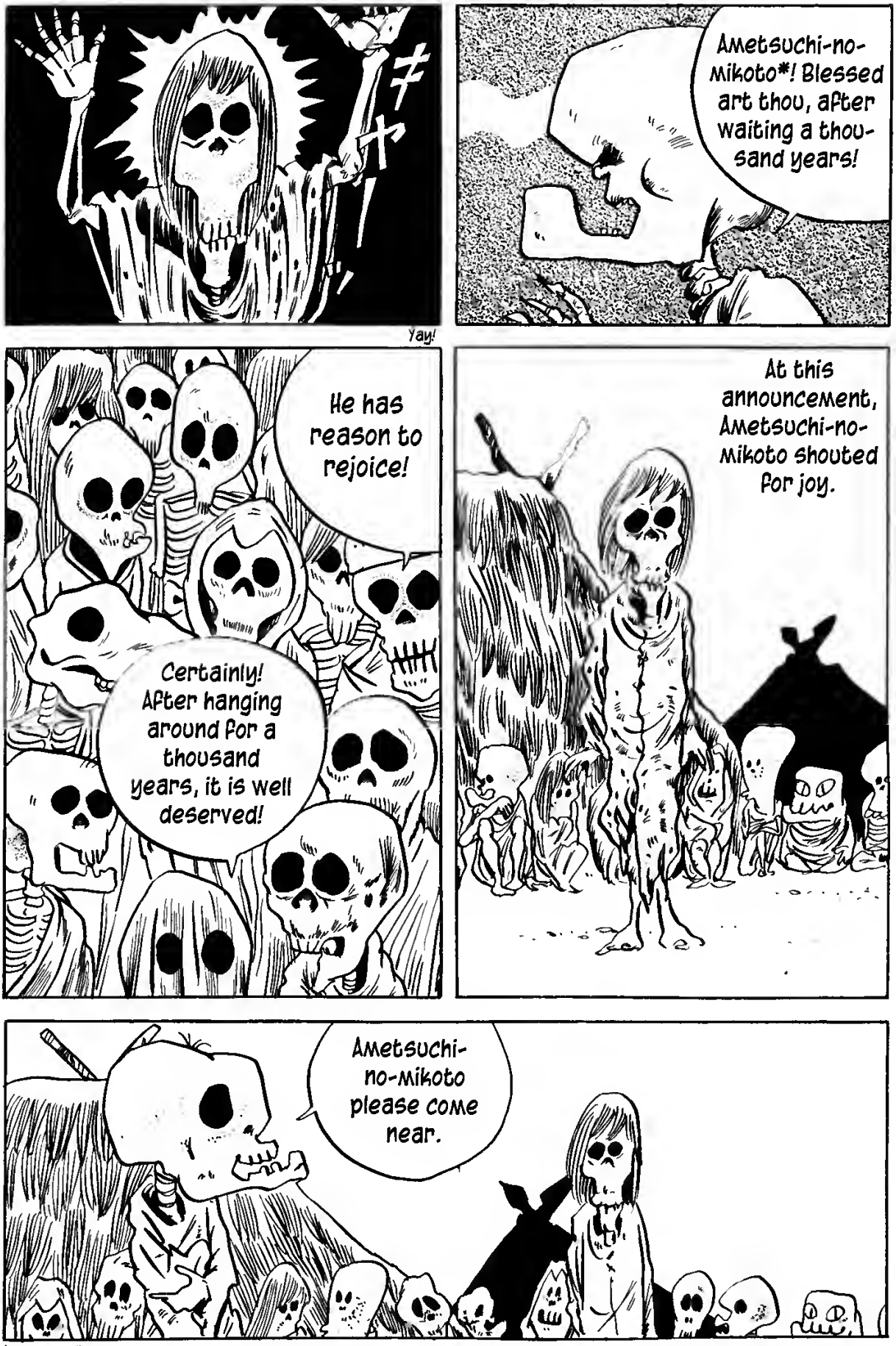
Fuut fuut fuut


I... I can't move!
Ah, my head... I am feeling dizzy...
The dead stopped him with their invisible hands...
Come on, calm down! The elder told us to be careful, so I'll wait a little longer.
What is Mogi doing?! He isn't dead, is he?!
Mogi being unconscious, the dead held a counsel.

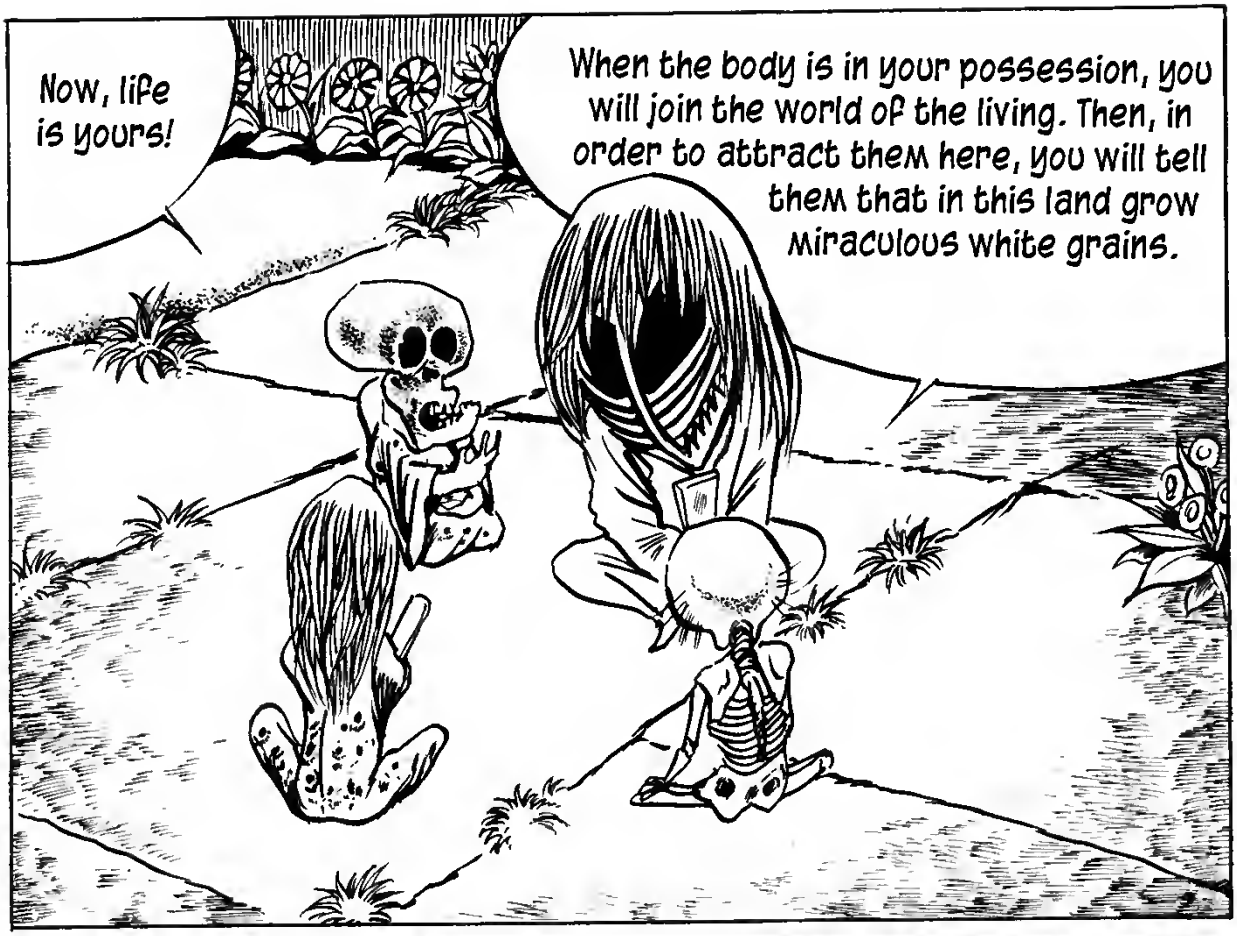

The elders had to choose which one, among all the dead, would have the right to nest his soul inside Mogi's body (indeed, let us not forget that the dead are only wandering souls!).

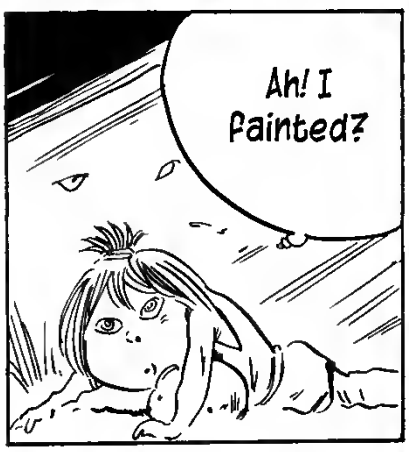

These creatures, some of which had waited for thousands of years, were terribly excited at the approach of the appointment of the one elected.


The name of the one who will possess this body is...
After much deliberation, one of them said:


キャー!
Yay!
Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto*! Blessed art thou, after waiting a thousand years!
He has reason to rejoice!
Certainly! After hanging around for a thousand years, it is well deserved!
At this announcement, Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto shouted for joy.
Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto please come near.

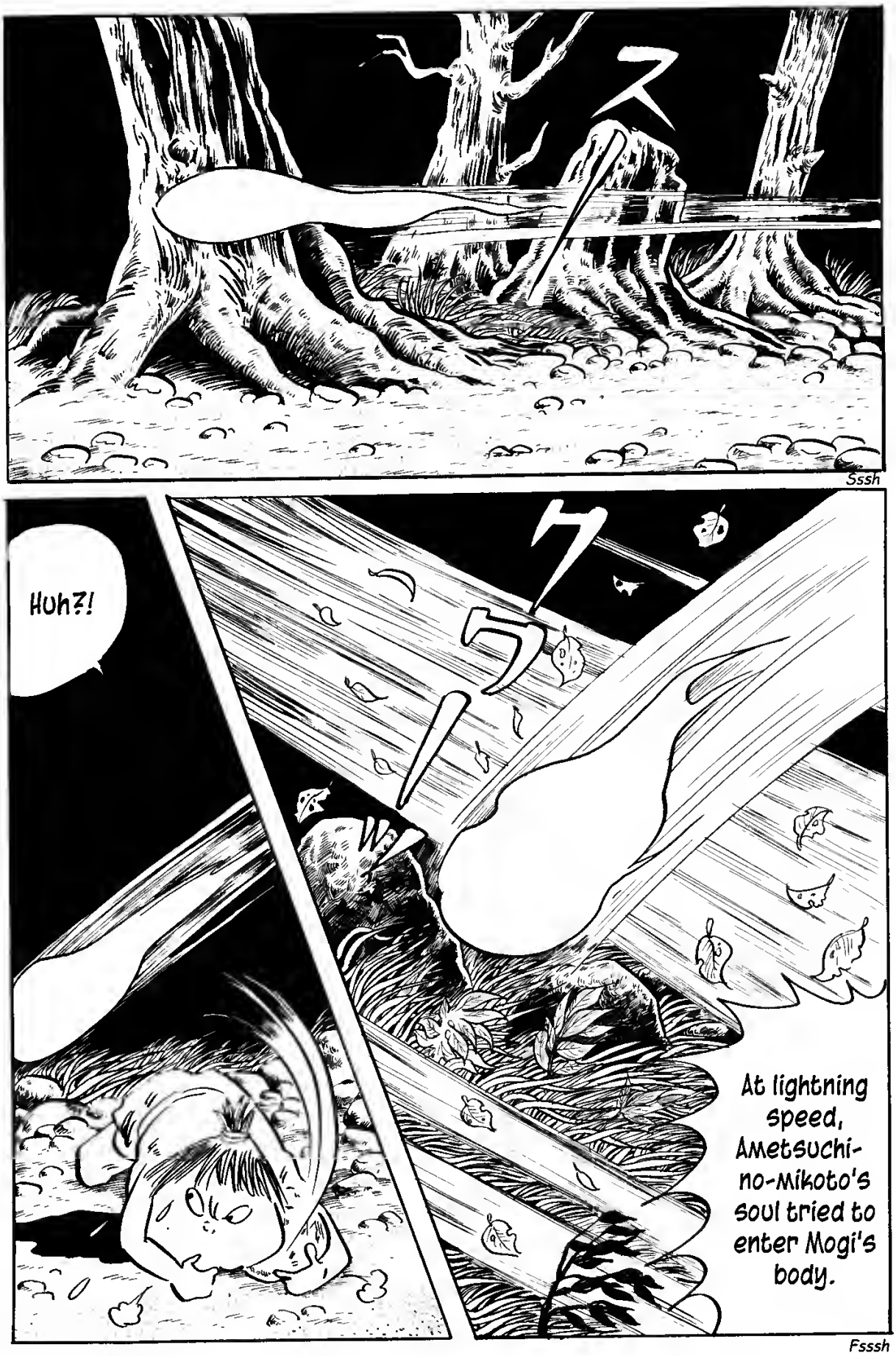
* Literally "God or soul of heaven and earth", Mizuki apparently invented the name for its old-fashioned consonance.

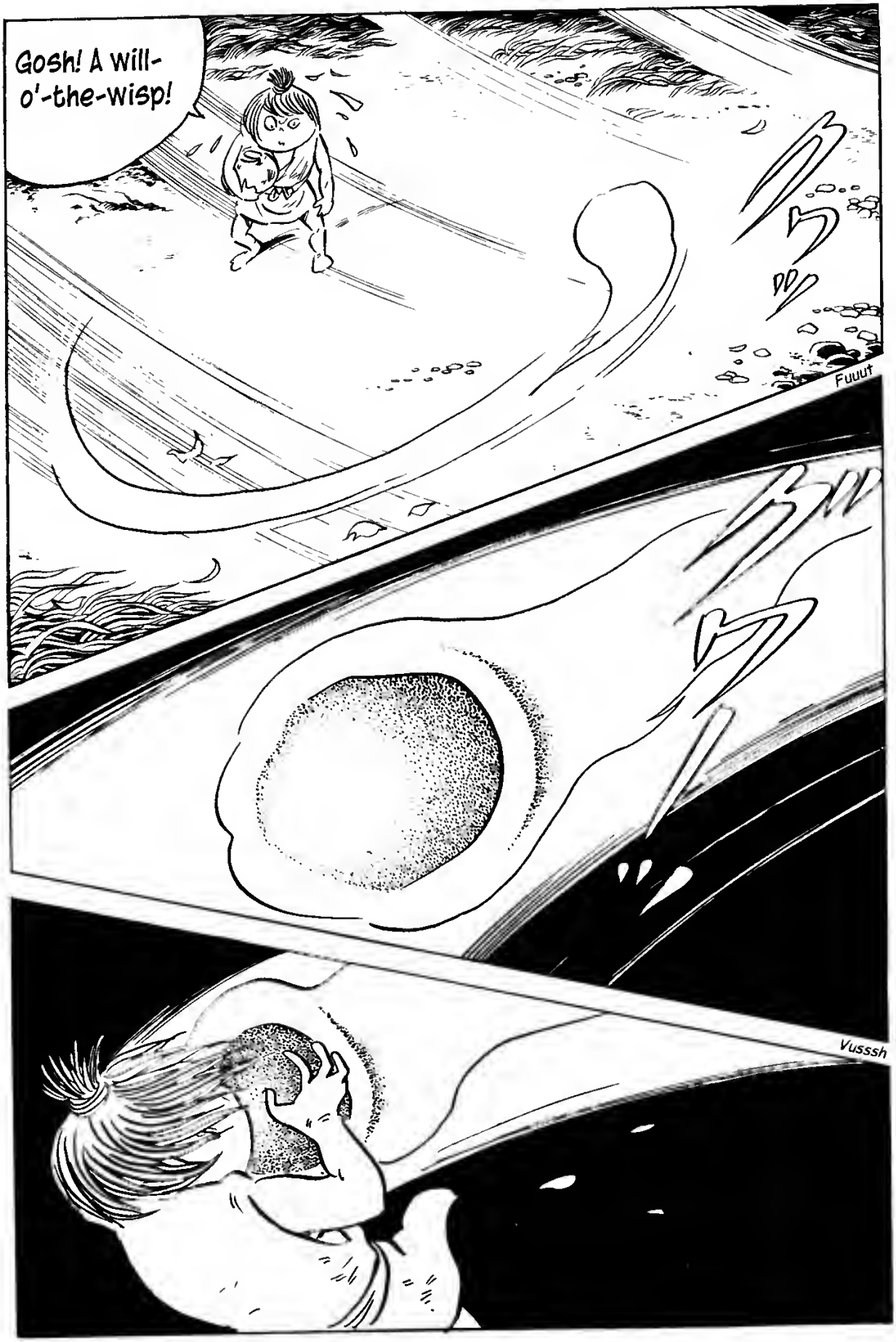

Now, life is yours!
When the body is in your possession, you will join the world of the living. Then, in order to attract them here, you will tell them that in this land grow miraculous white grains.

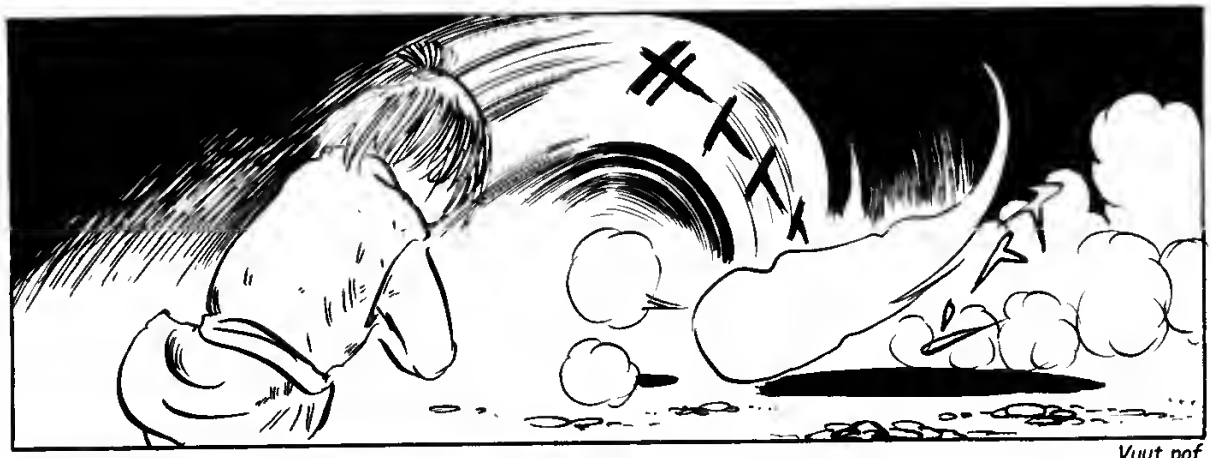

Ah! I fainted?

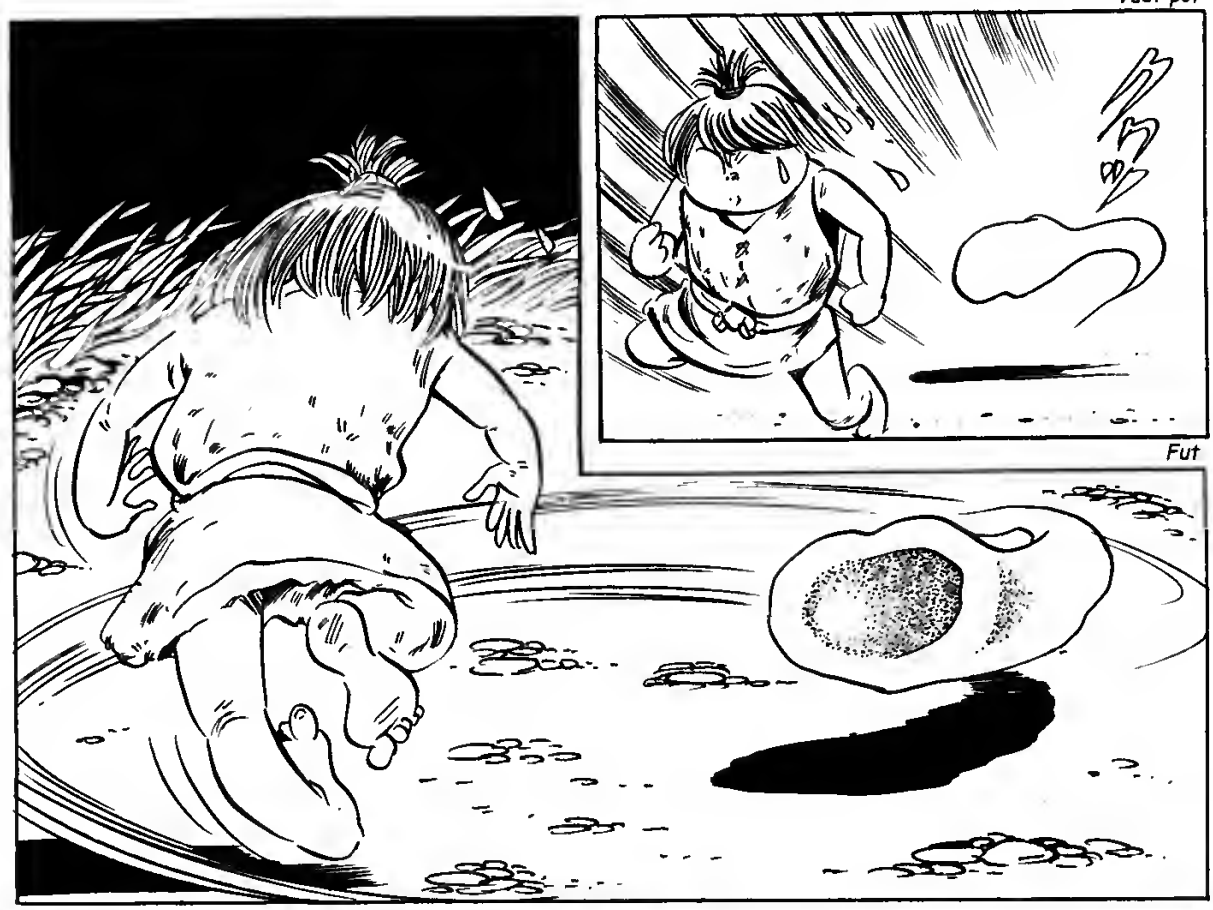
But what's happening?

Broooff

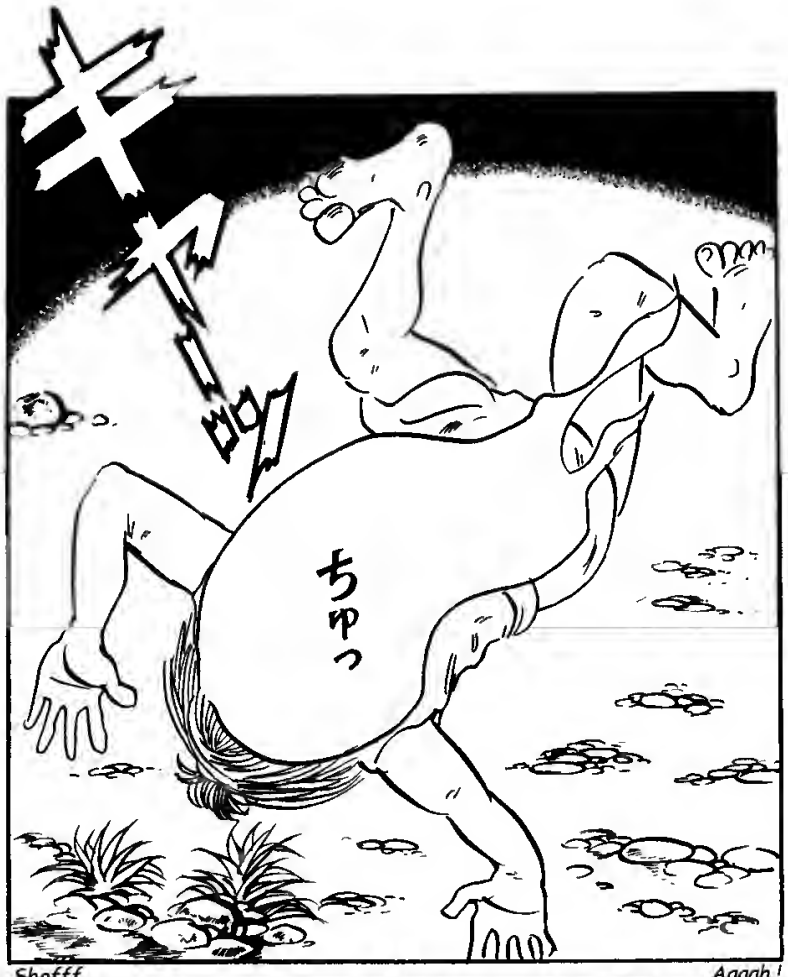

Sssh
Huhz!
Fsssh
At lightning speed, Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto's soul tried to enter Mogi's body.

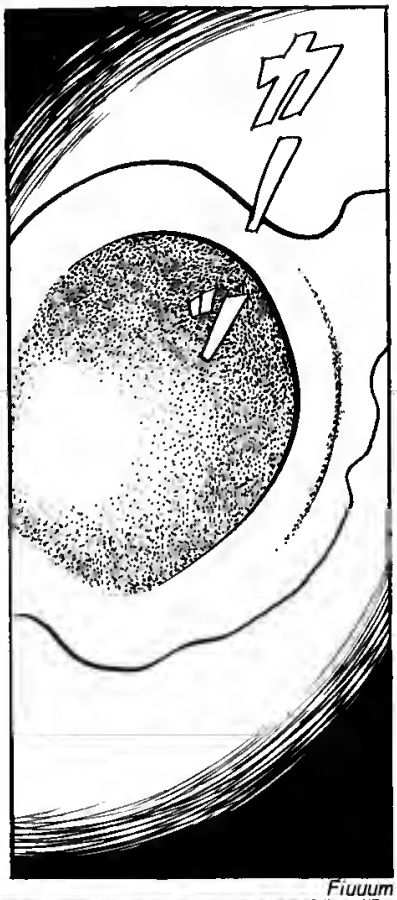

Gosh! A will-o'-the-wisp!
Fuuut
Vusssh

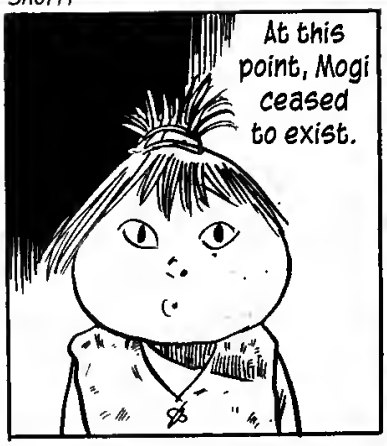

Vuut pof

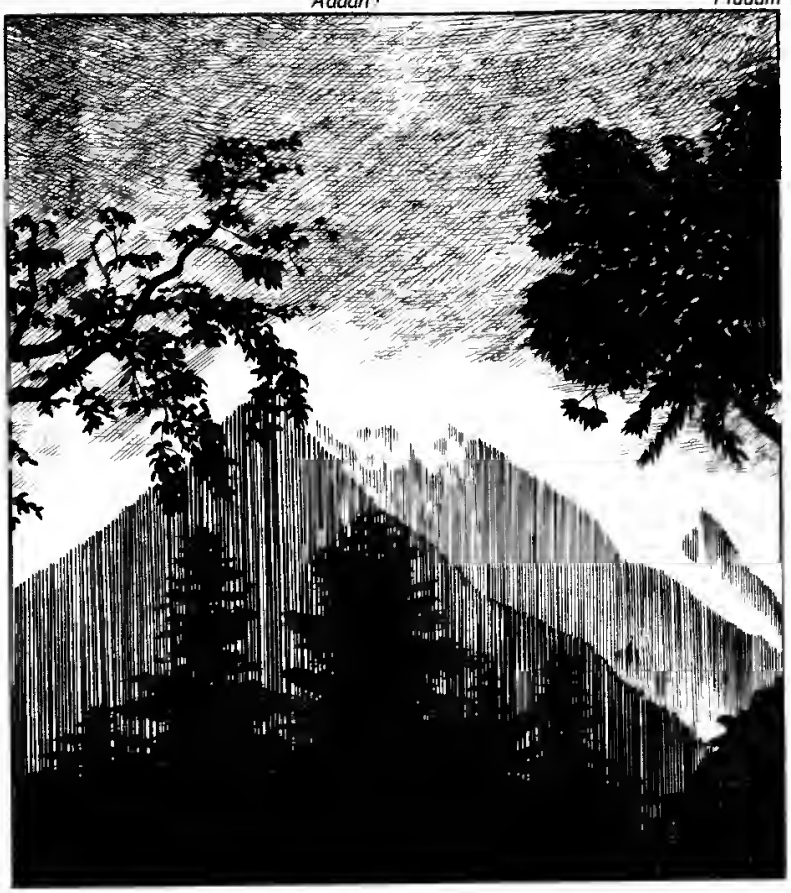

Fut

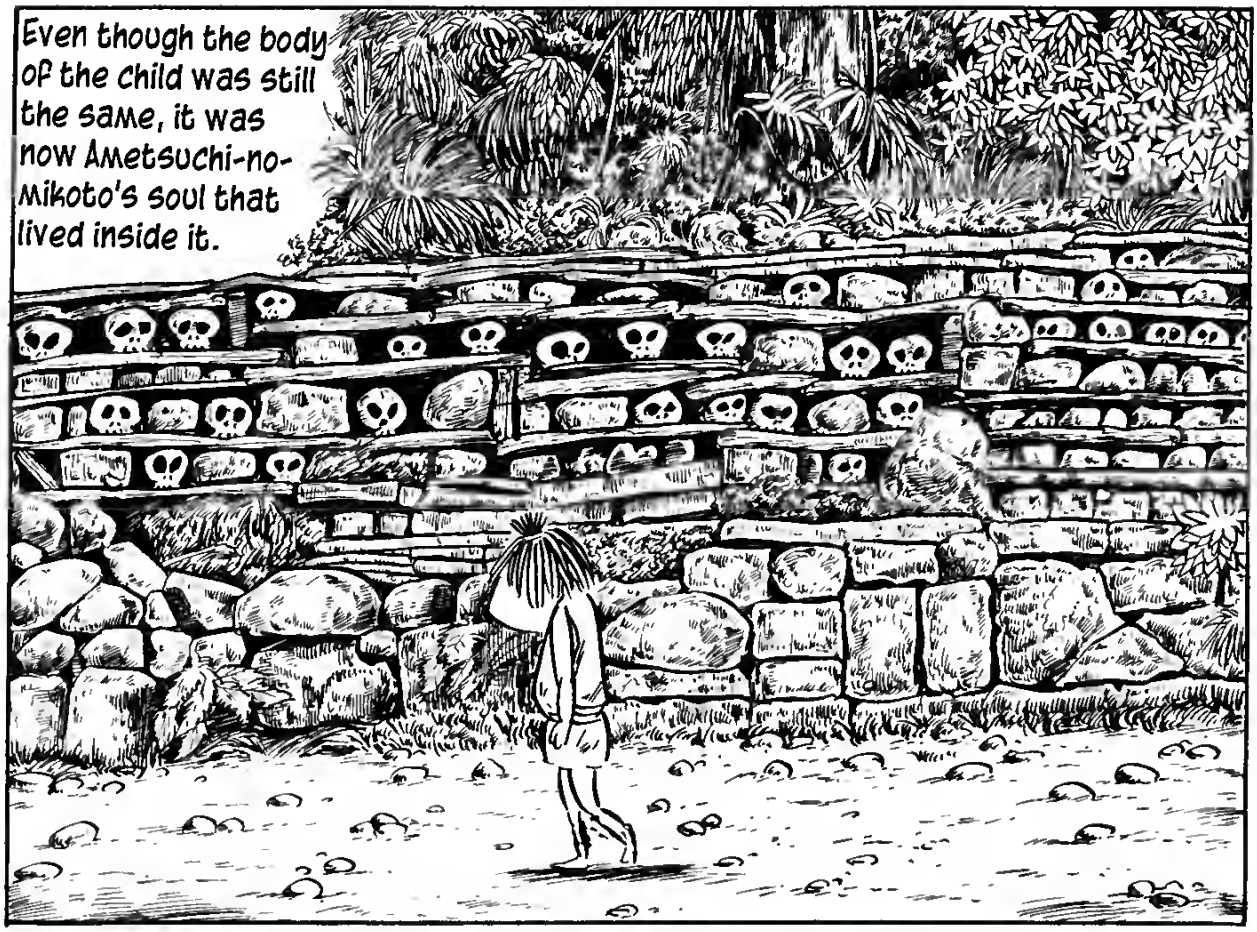
Fiuut


ちゅっ
Shofff


Aaaah!
Fiuuum

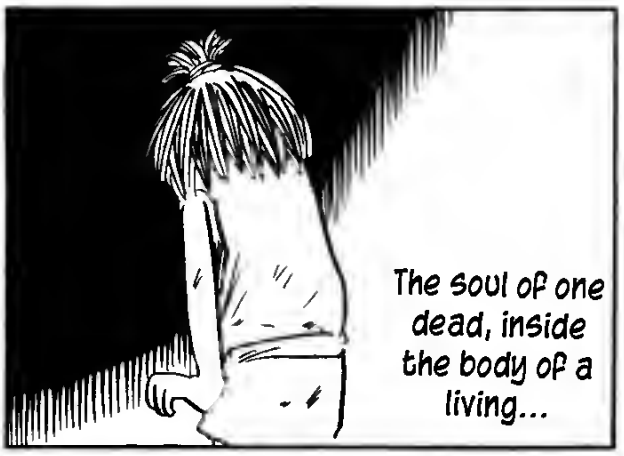

At this point, Mogi ceased to exist.

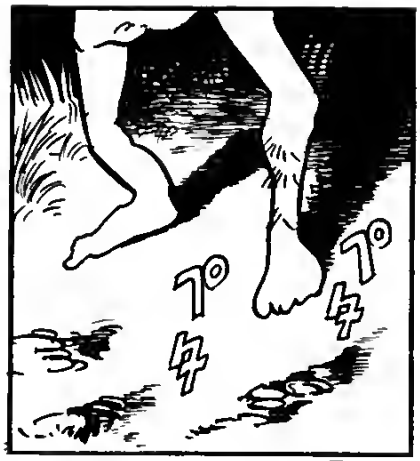



Even though the body of the child was still the same, it was now Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto's soul that lived inside it.

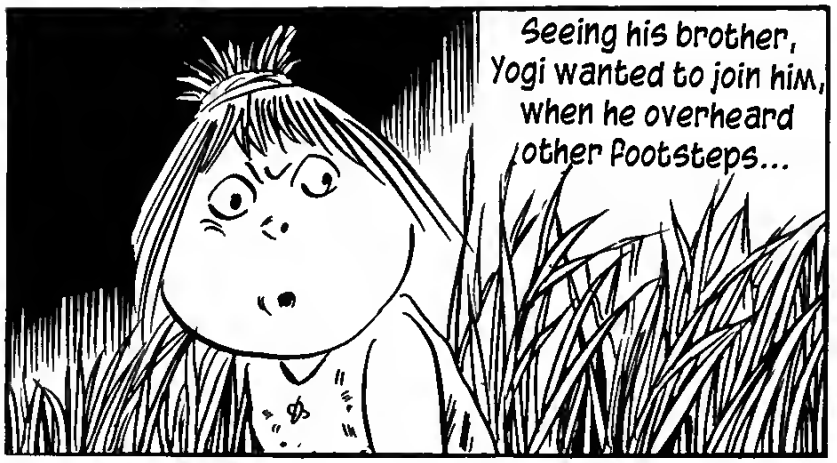
あっ

Ah!

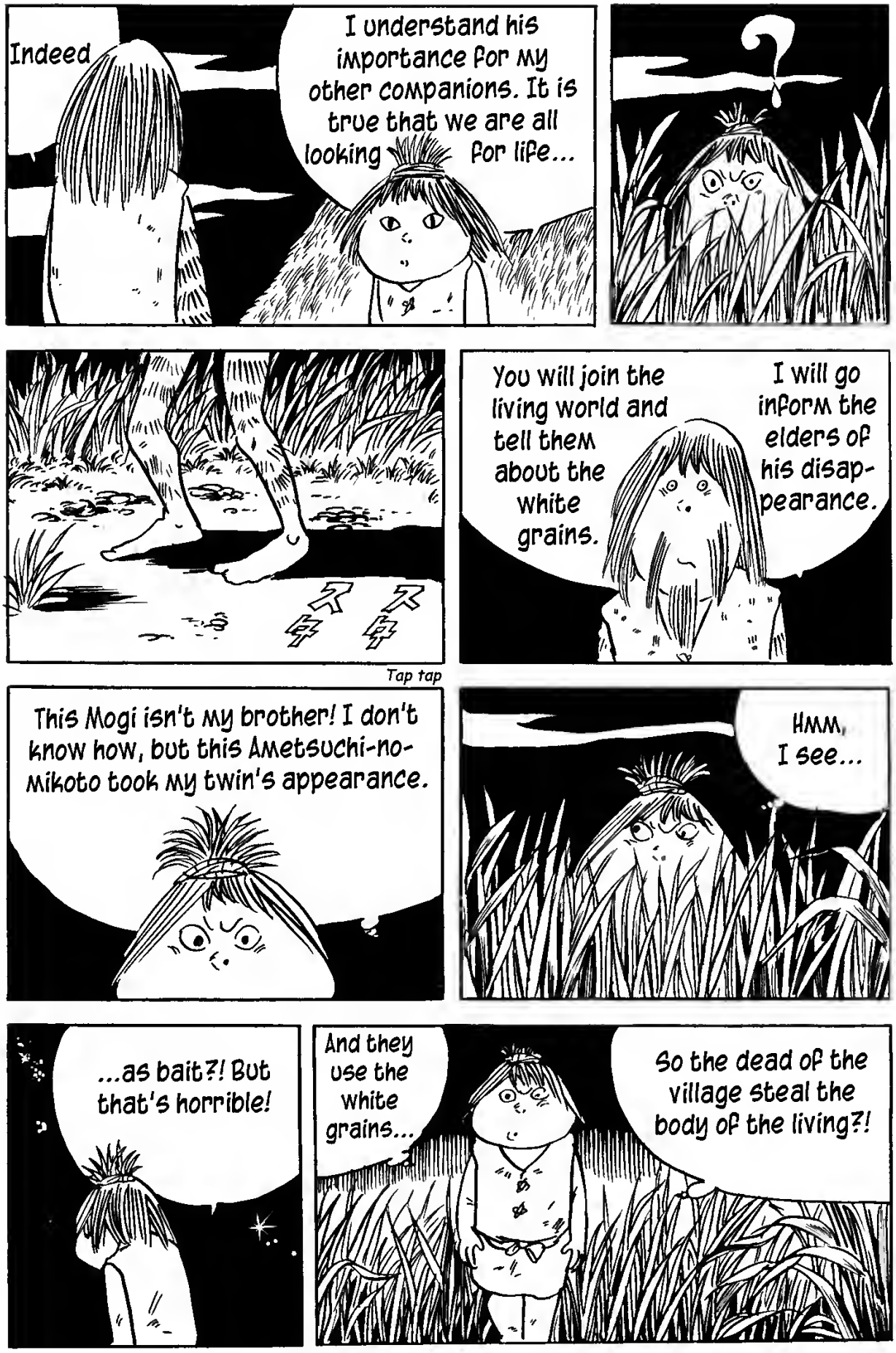

The soul of one dead, inside the body of a living...


トッ
トッ

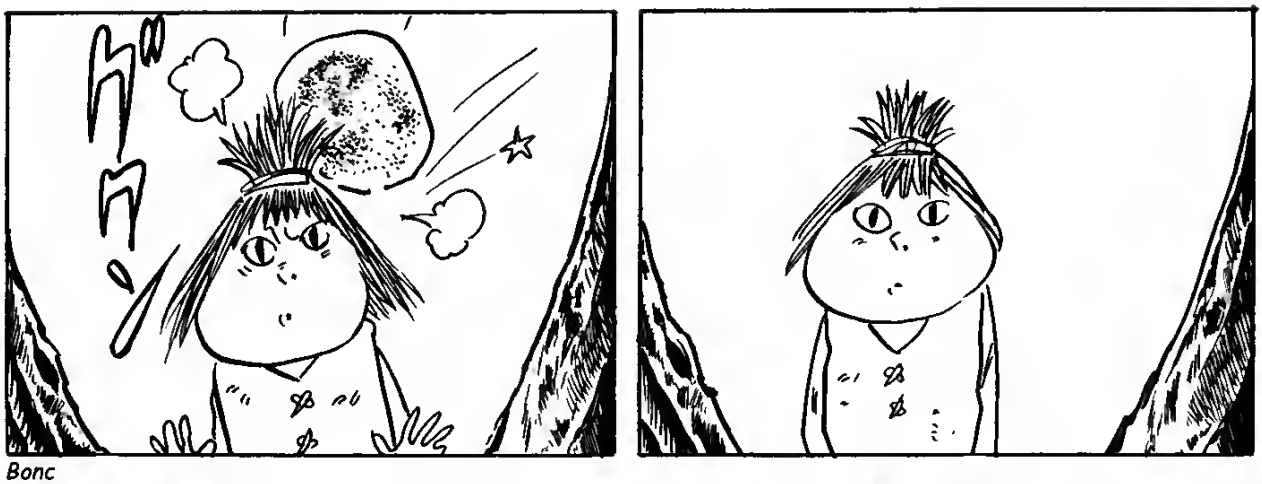
Tap tap


Seeing his brother, Yogi wanted to join him, when he overheard other footsteps...

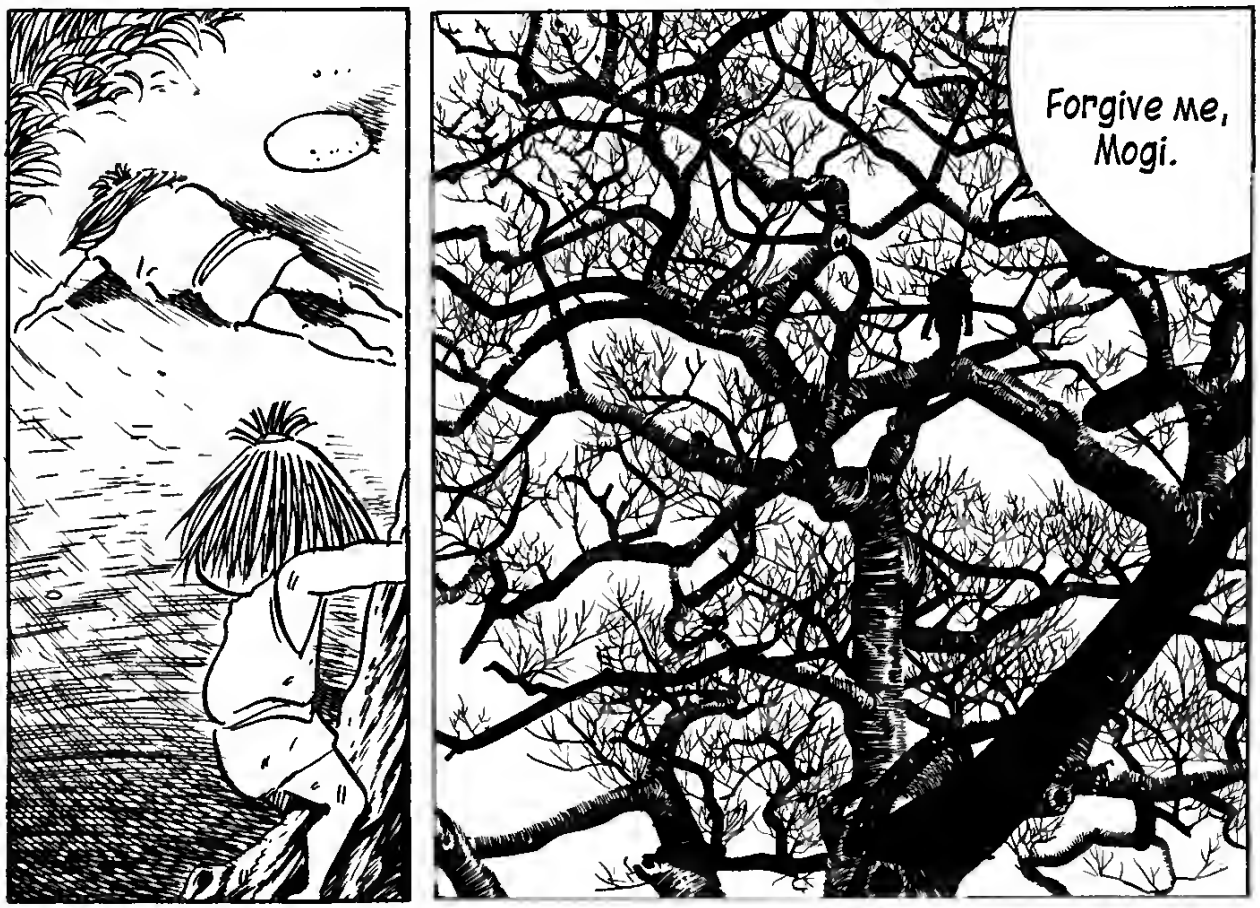
Well, well, last year's traveler...
I am Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto, and this is my new body.
No, there was only one.
And the other little squirt, where is he? I'm sure there were two of them.
?
Hmm, now that is strange ...
The elder from Oku-tama's village said that he sent two kids!
But I'm telling you! I am sure!

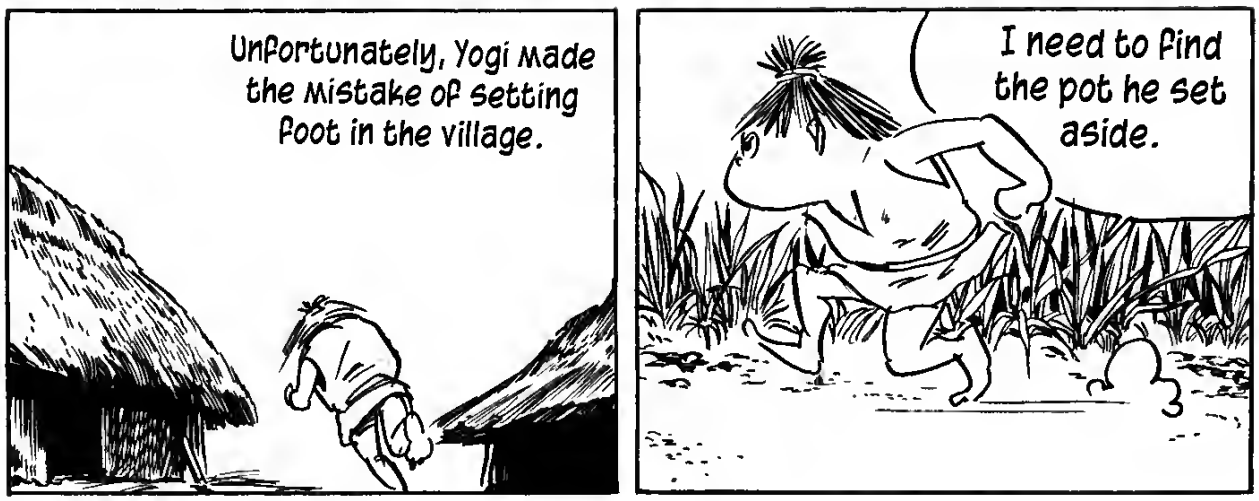

Indeed
I understand his importance for my other companions. It is true that we are all looking for life...
Tap tap
You will join the living world and tell them about the white grains.
I will go inform the elders of his disappearance.
This Mogi isn't my brother! I don't know how, but this Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto took my twin's appearance.
Hmm, I see...
...as bait?! But that's horrible!
And they use the white grains...
So the dead of the village steal the body of the living?!

...I could take his place and steal some grains...
What do I do? If I kill Mogi, I mean, his body...
If I kill him, the dead's soul will escape and...
Hmm, no...
What if I knock him out? Then, Ametsuchi-no-Mikoto's soul will stay inside his body.
...tell his accomplices about me.
Have courage... I have to do it!

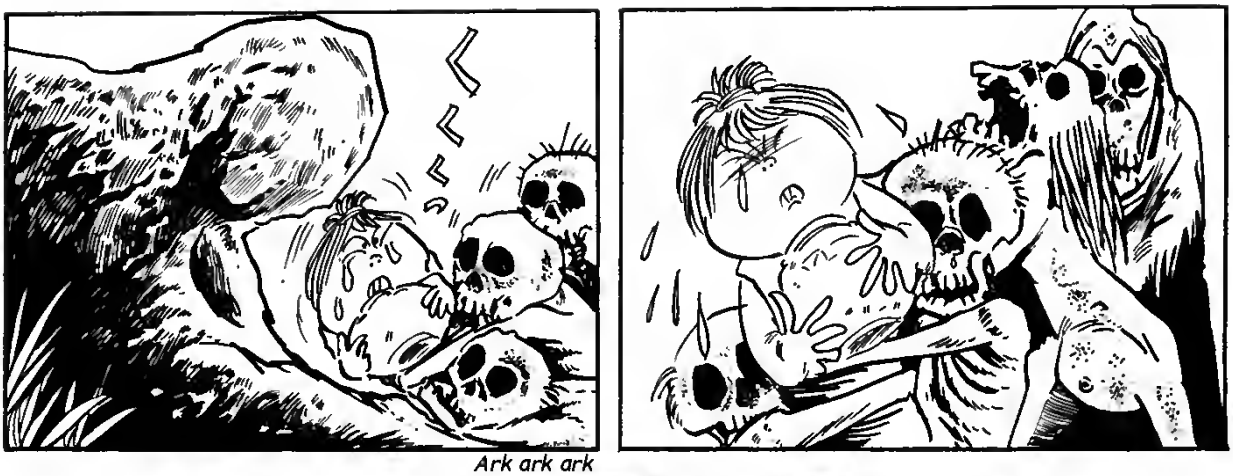


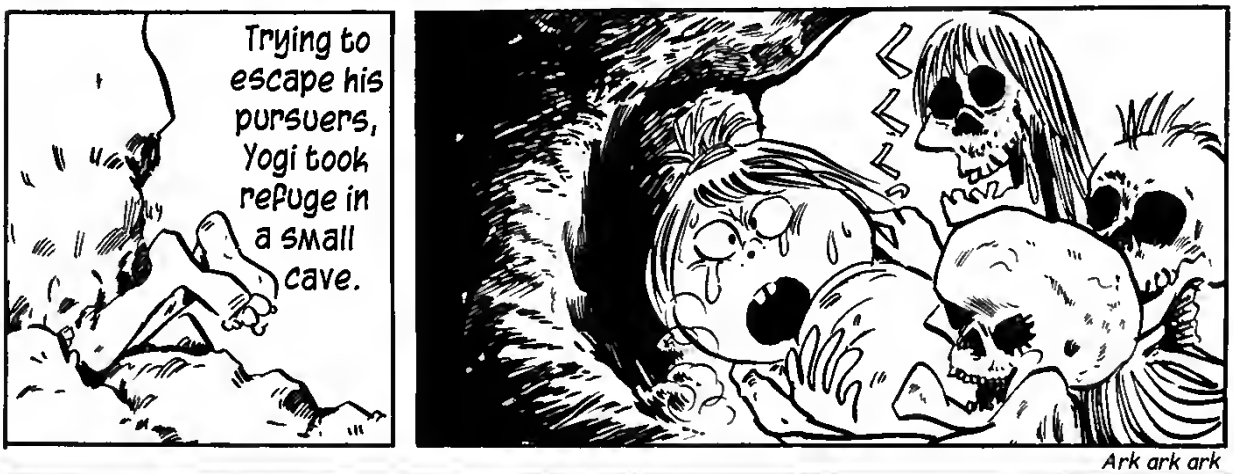
Bonc

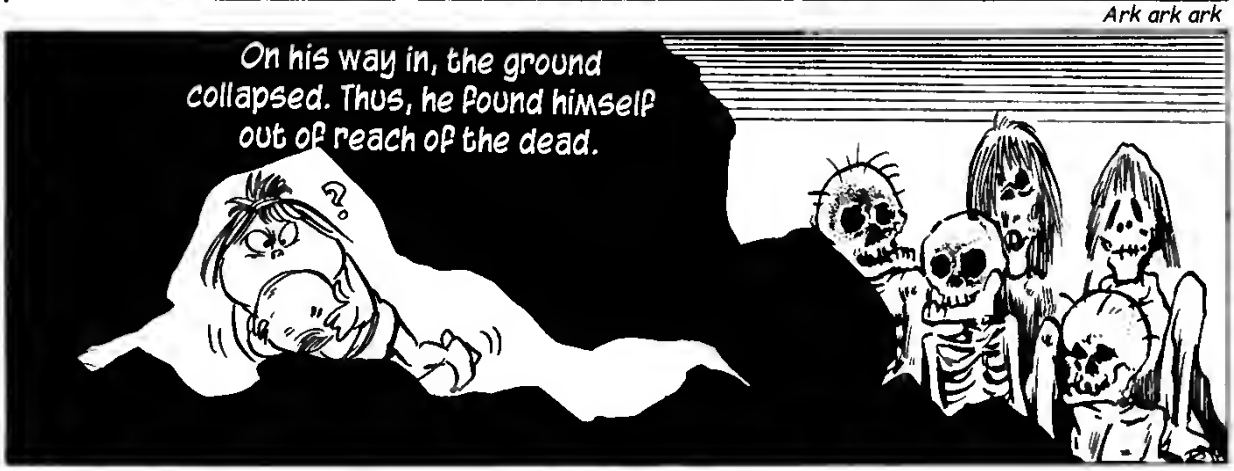

Forgive me, Mogi.

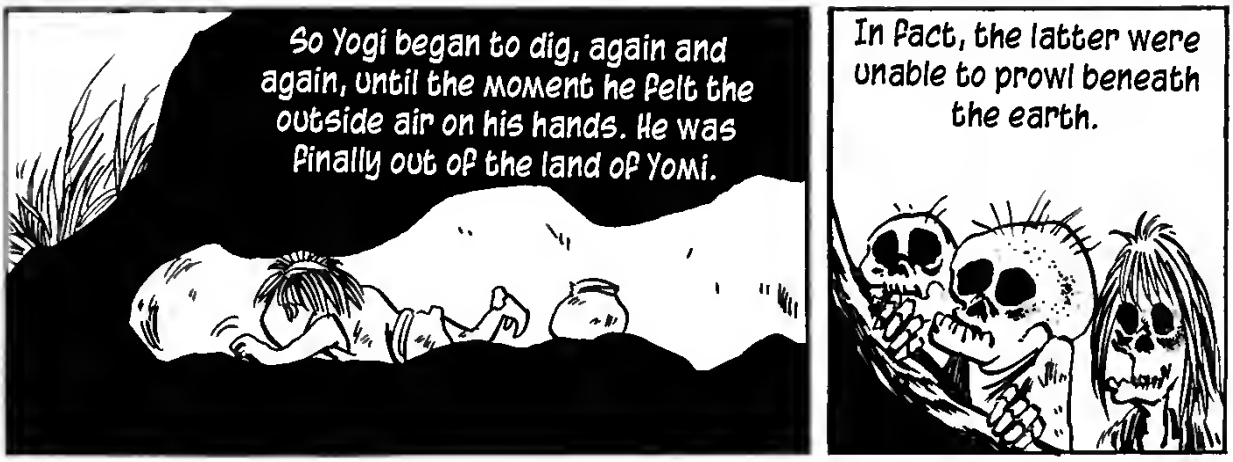

Unfortunately, Yogi made the mistake of setting foot in the village.
I need to find the pot he set aside.

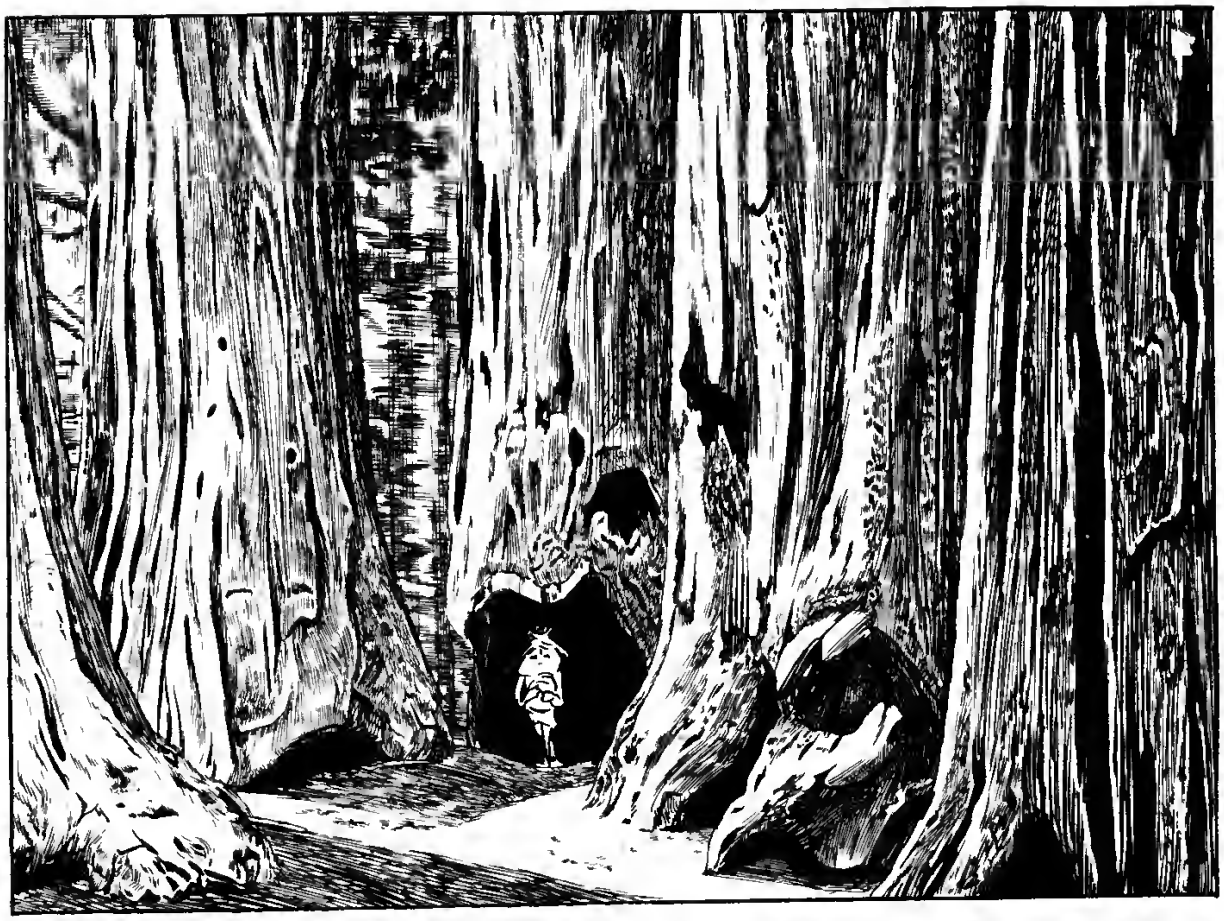
Immediately, the dead attacked him.
Ah! My legs!
But he showed me what not to do!
Damn! I'm going to get caught, like my brother!
No! I don't want this! There is no way he died for nothing!!


Ark ark ark


Trying to escape his pursuers, Yogi took refuge in a small cave.
Ark ark ark

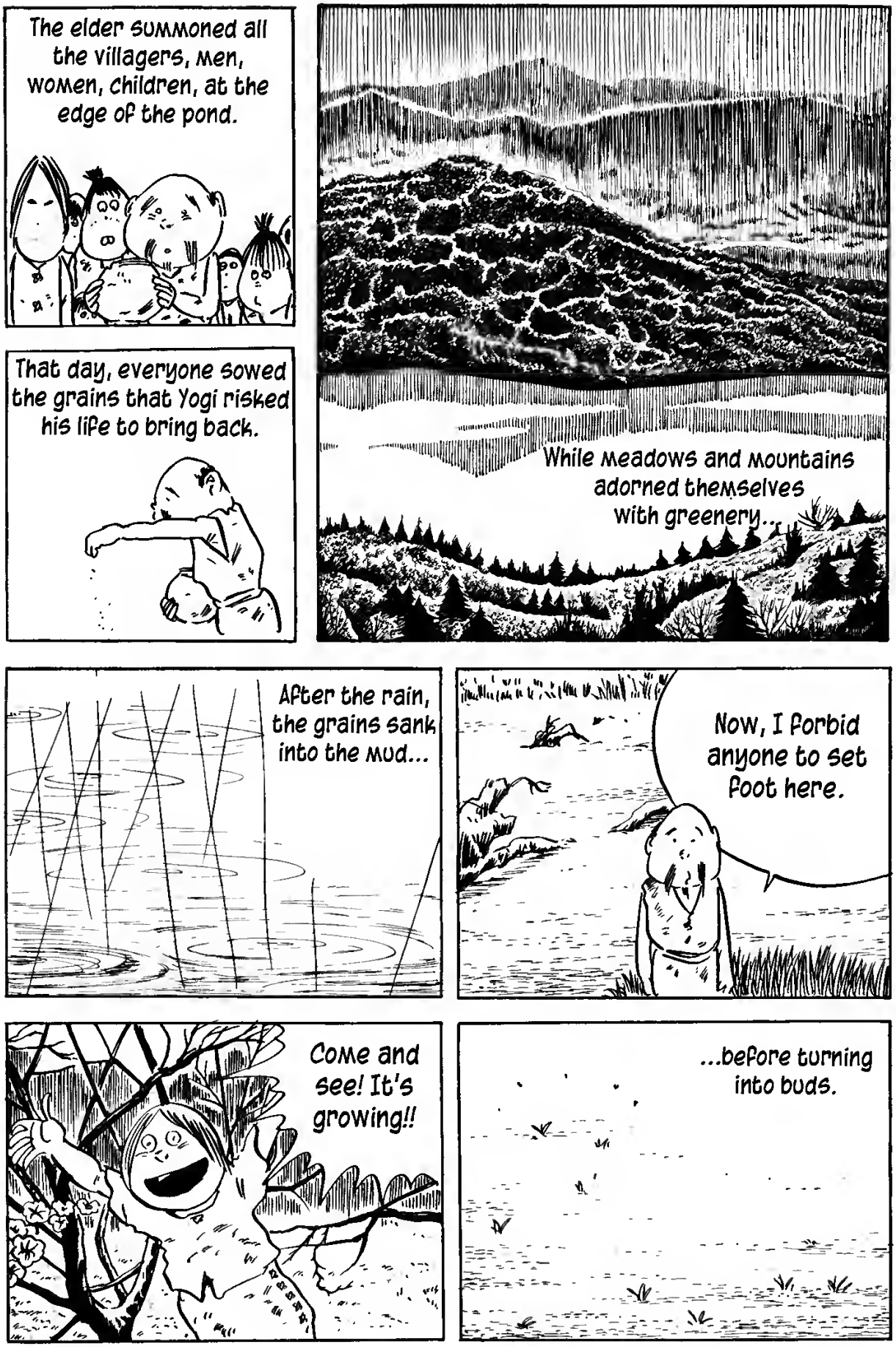

On his way in, the ground collapsed. Thus, he found himself out of reach of the dead.

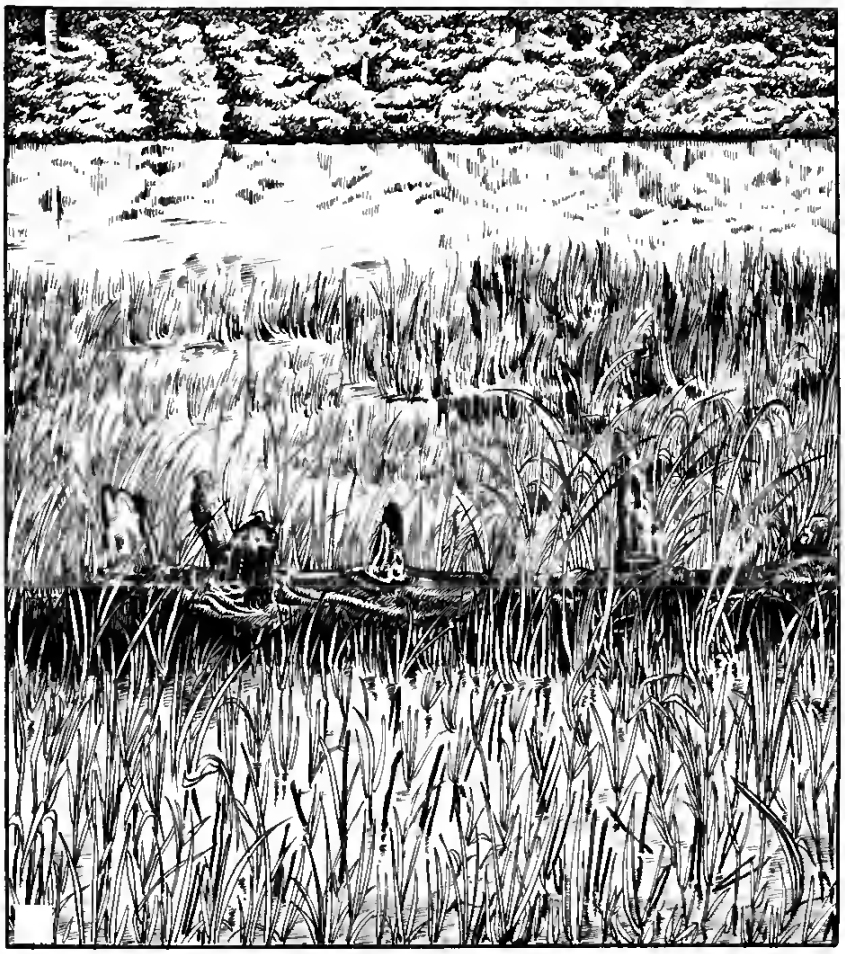

So Yogi began to dig, again and again, until the moment he felt the outside air on his hands. He was finally out of the land of Yomi.
In fact, the latter were unable to prowl beneath the earth.

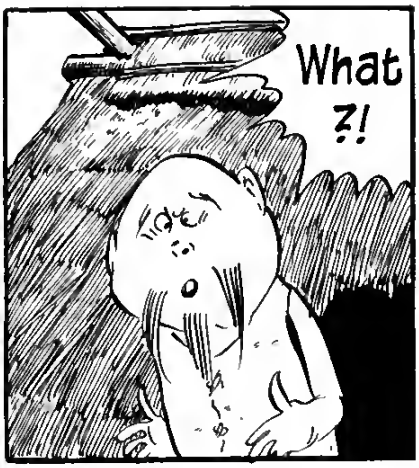


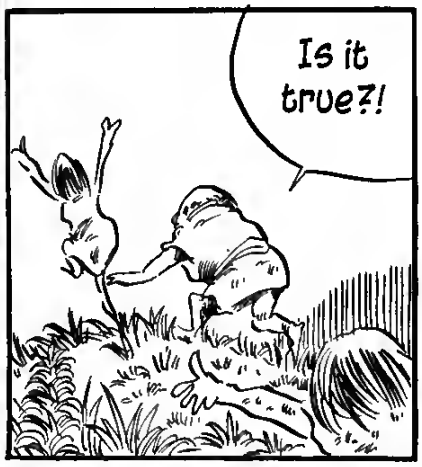
The next spring ...

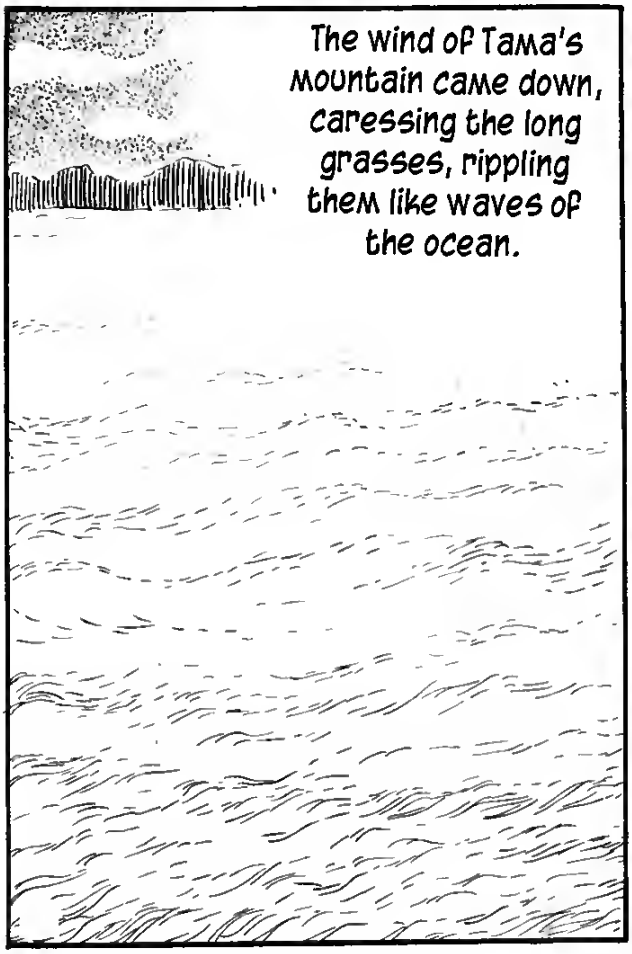
Yogi, you are brave, my child.
At the village, the elder was eagerly awaiting his return.


The elder summoned all the villagers, men, women, children, at the edge of the pond.
That day, everyone sowed the grains that Yogi risked his life to bring back.
While meadows and mountains adorned themselves with greenery...
After the rain, the grains sank into the mud...
Now, I forbid anyone to set foot here.
Come and see! It's growing!!
...before turning into buds.

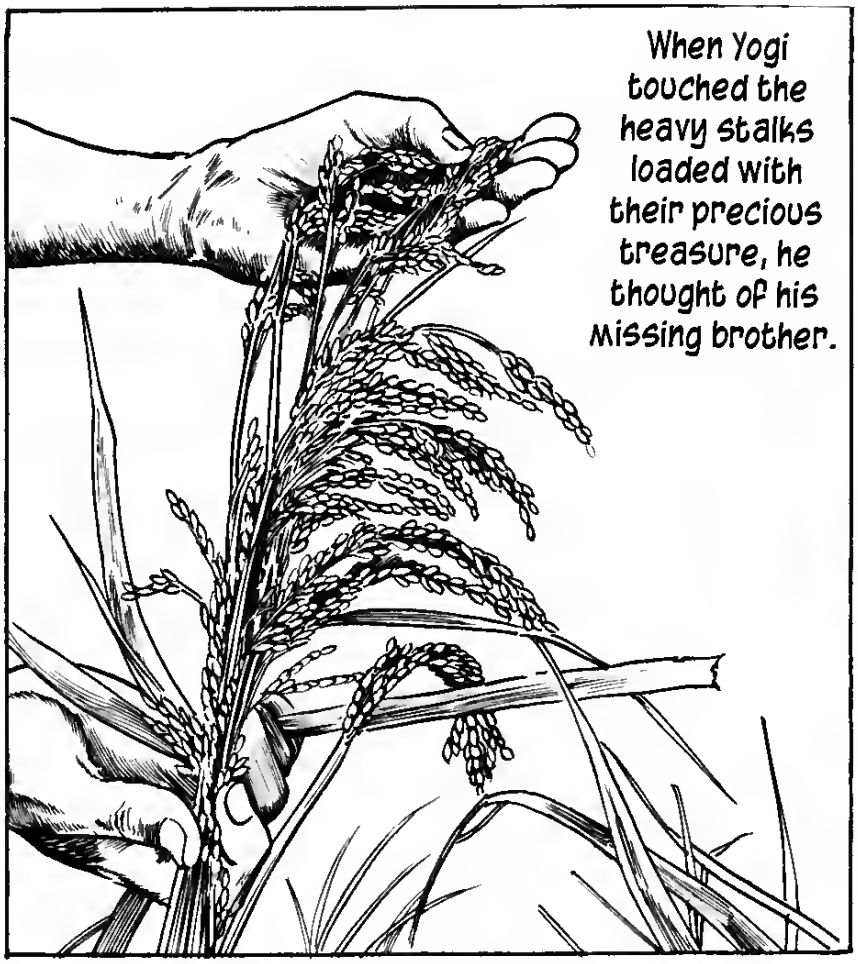


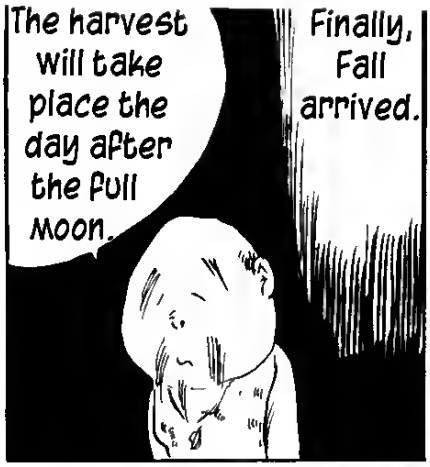

What
?!

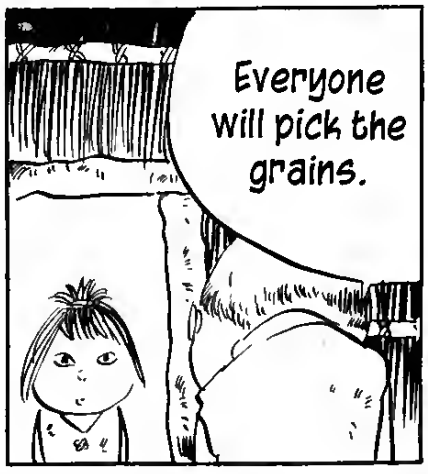

Is it
true?!

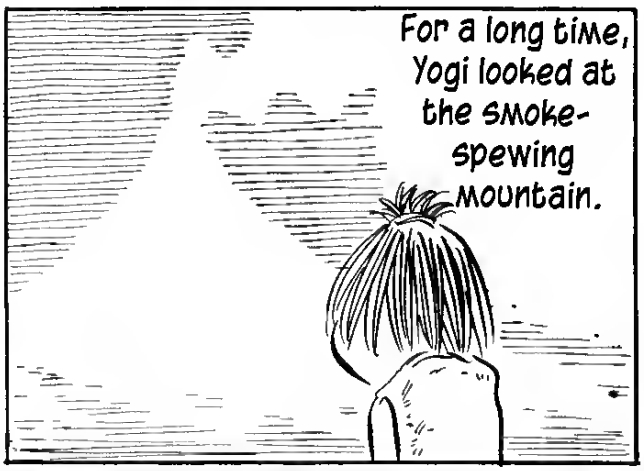

The wind of Tama's mountain came down, caressing the long grasses, rippling them like waves of the ocean.

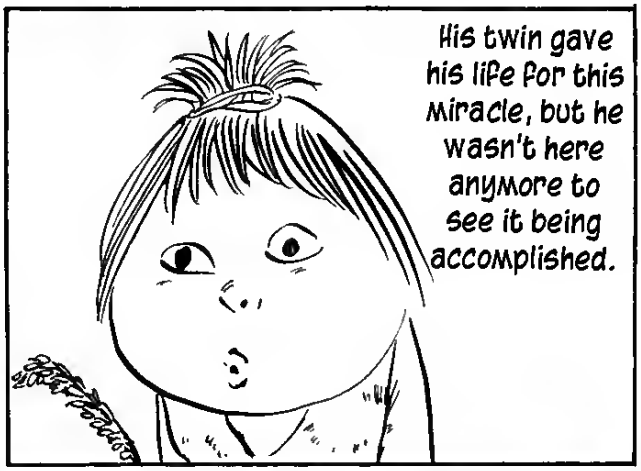
More rain followed... Then came the hot summer days.


When Yogi touched the heavy stalks loaded with their precious treasure, he thought of his missing brother.

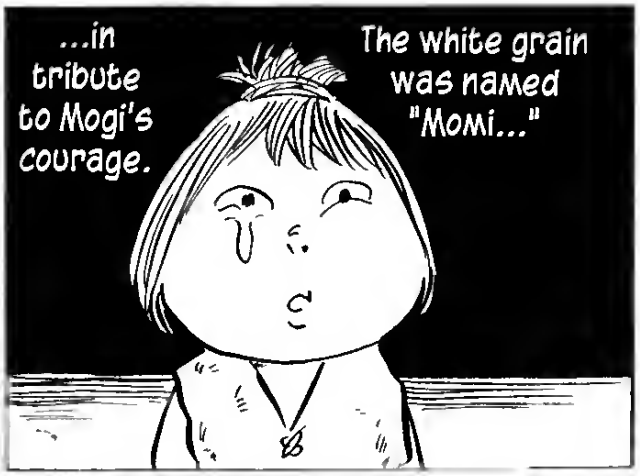

The harvest will take place the day after the full moon.
Finally, Fall arrived.


Everyone will pick the grains.


For a long time, Yogi looked at the smoke-spewing mountain.


His twin gave his life for this miracle, but he wasn't here anymore to see it being accomplished.

Thus ends the story of our ancestors, who did not hesitate to sacrifice themselves for a commodity that is now abundant and common.


...in tribute to Mogi's courage.
The white grain was named "Momi..."

Shigeru Mizuki

3, RUE DES MYSTÈRES

Cornélius

Collection Paul

Shigeru Mizuki est né le 8 mars 1922 à Sakai-minato, petite ville côtière du sud-ouest du Japon. Il connaît là une enfance libre et heureuse, période faste dont il s'inspirera à de nombreuses reprises dans ses mangas. Très tôt, il montre des aptitudes étonnantes pour le dessin, talent encouragé sans réserve par ses parents.

Il a à peine vingt ans lorsque la guerre vient interrompre ses espoirs de carrière. Il est enrôlé dans l'armée impériale japonaise et est envoyé dans la jungle de Nouvelle-Guinée, où il va vivre un véritable cauchemar : il contracte rapidement la malaria, assiste à la mort de la plupart de ses camarades et perd le bras gauche dans un bombardement. Détenu sur place à la fin de la guerre, il se lie d'amitié avec les membres d'une tribu locale, amitié qui le sauvera de la famine, de la maladie et de la folie.

Ce n'est finalement qu'en 1957, après une vie déjà riche de souvenirs et de blessures, que Mizuki entame la carrière qui a fait de lui l'un des plus grands raconteurs d'histoires de son pays. Fin connaisseur des yôkai et du surnaturel, il n'a eu de cesse d'explorer depuis, les univers qui se cachent derrière notre monde pour mieux dire sa profonde compréhension de l'âme humaine.

À l'exemple de Toriyama Sekien qui avait dressé, vers 1780, l'inventaire des monstres japonais, Shigeru Mizuki a réintroduit dans la culture populaire les yôkaï, ces êtres surnaturels du quotidien que la modernisation de l'ère Meiji avait mis en sommeil.

Amoureux des contes populaires et du merveilleux qui s'infiltre dans les interstices de la vie ordinaire, le créateur de ***Kitaro*** (série en cours chez Cornélius) a mis les yôkaï au centre d'une œuvre qui oscille constamment entre fantastique, humour et poésie.

Explorant la frontière incertaine et mouvante qui sépare les spectres des vivants, les histoires de la série ***3, rue des Mystères*** sont des fables étranges, dans lesquelles il suffit d'emprunter un ascenseur pour passer d'un monde à l'autre. Les hommes s'y font berner par des fantômes, ils y trouvent des fortunes inespérées, ils y cherchent même le bonheur.. mais ils se condamnent eux-mêmes à n'être que des hommes.

Faisant suite à la nostalgie de ***NonNonBâ*** et à l'absurde d'***Opération Mort***, ces nouvelles nous font goûter à la veine grinçante de Mizuki, achevant de présenter au public français ce dieu vivant du manga, qui entend bien dessiner encore jusqu'à 110 ans avant de pouvoir, à son tour, devenir un yôkaï.

Shigeru Mizuki

3, RUE DES MYSTÈRES

et autres histoires

Éditions Cornélius

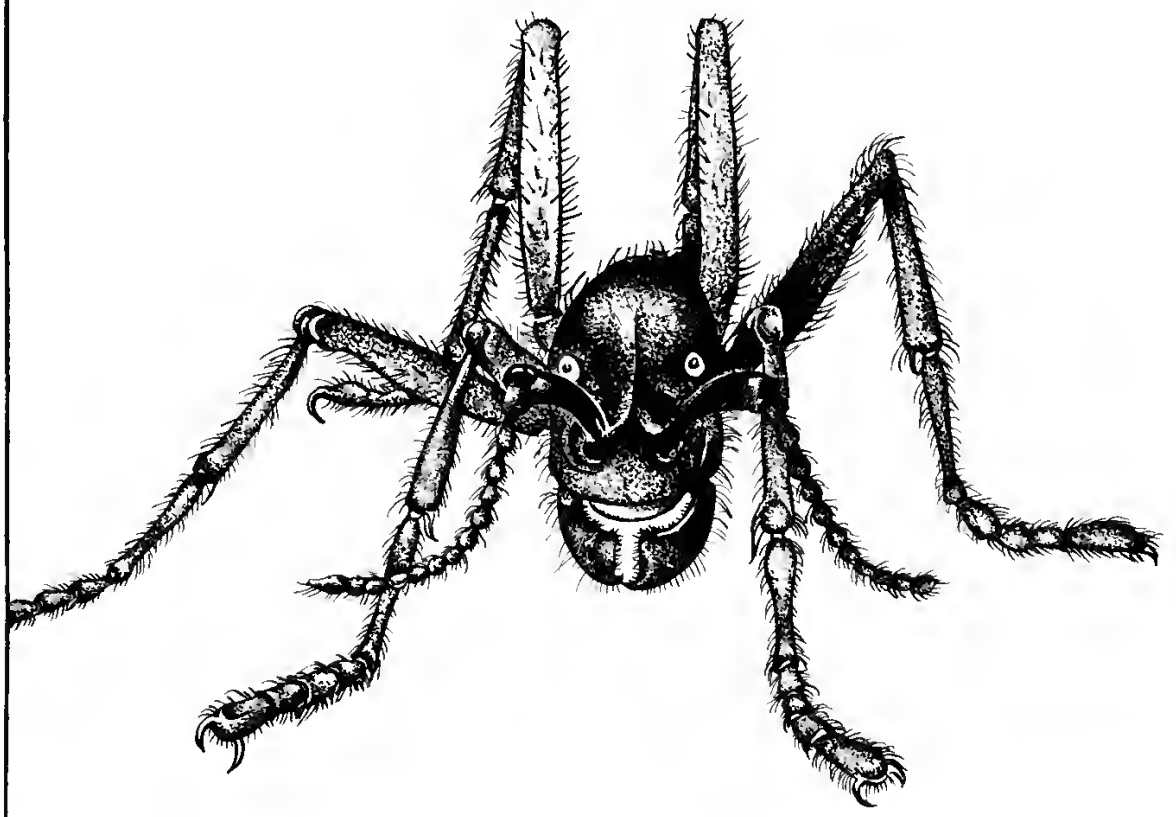
2

Shigeru Mizuki

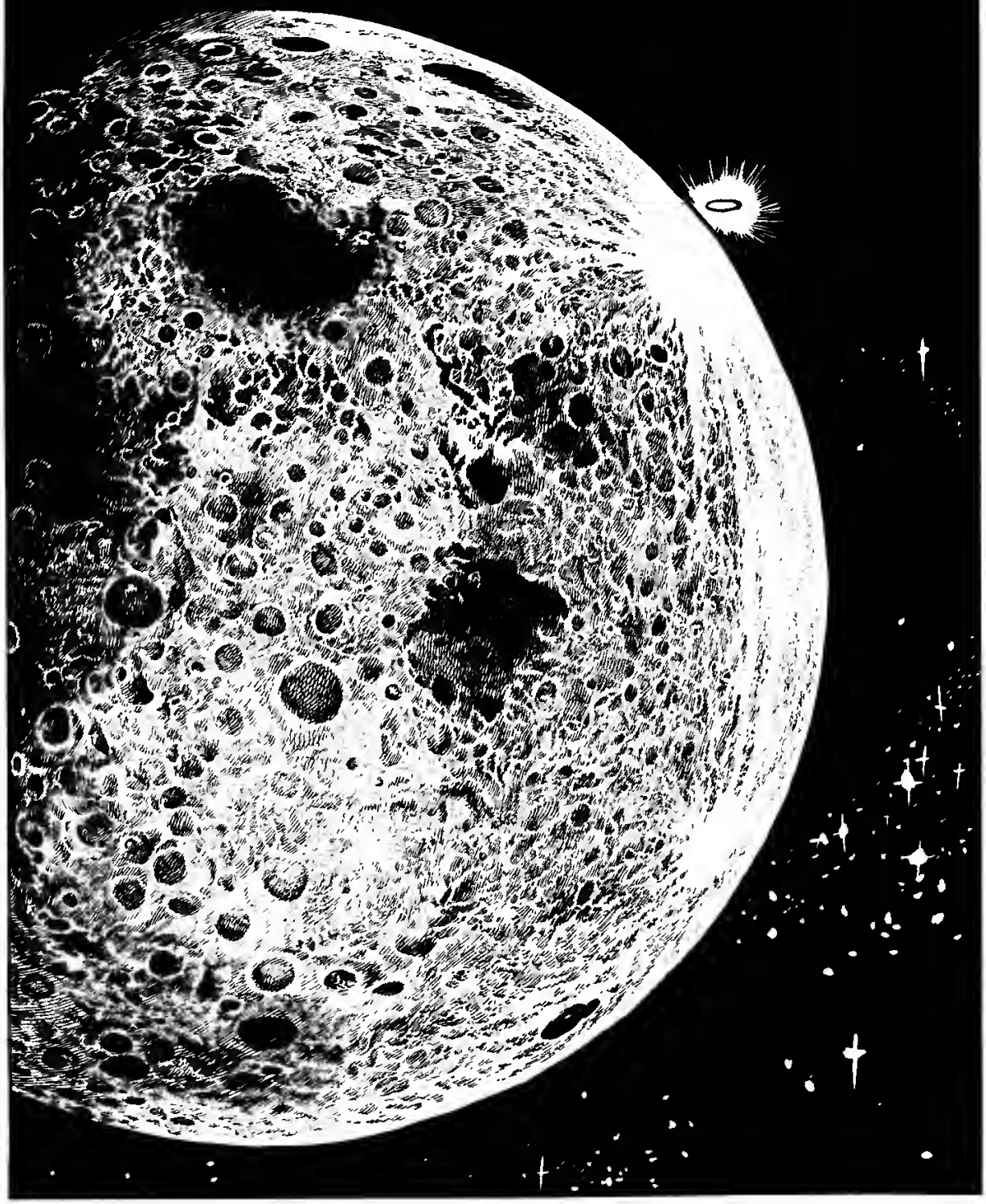
3, RUE DES MYSTÈRES

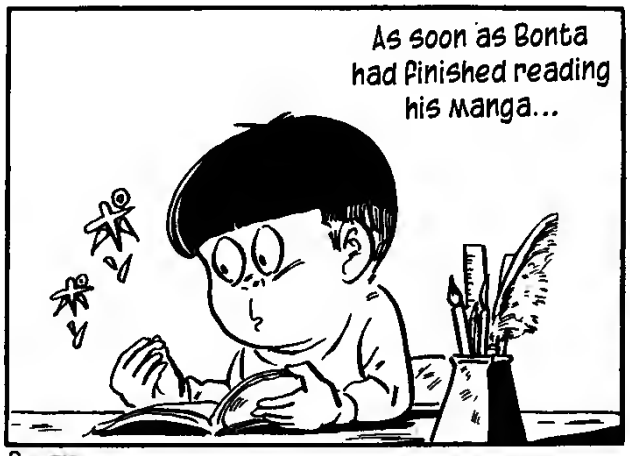
Cornélius

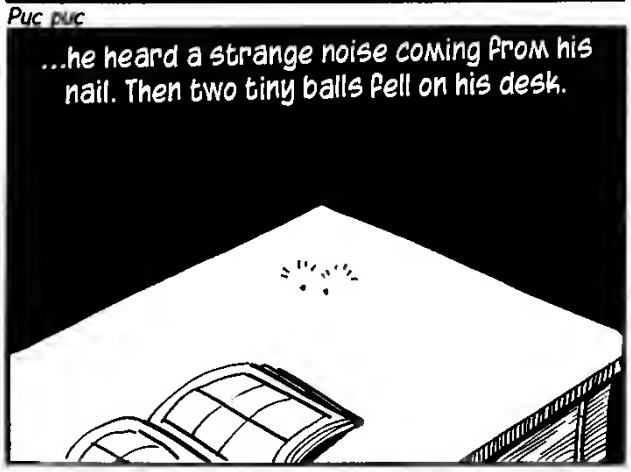
The extraterrestrial insects

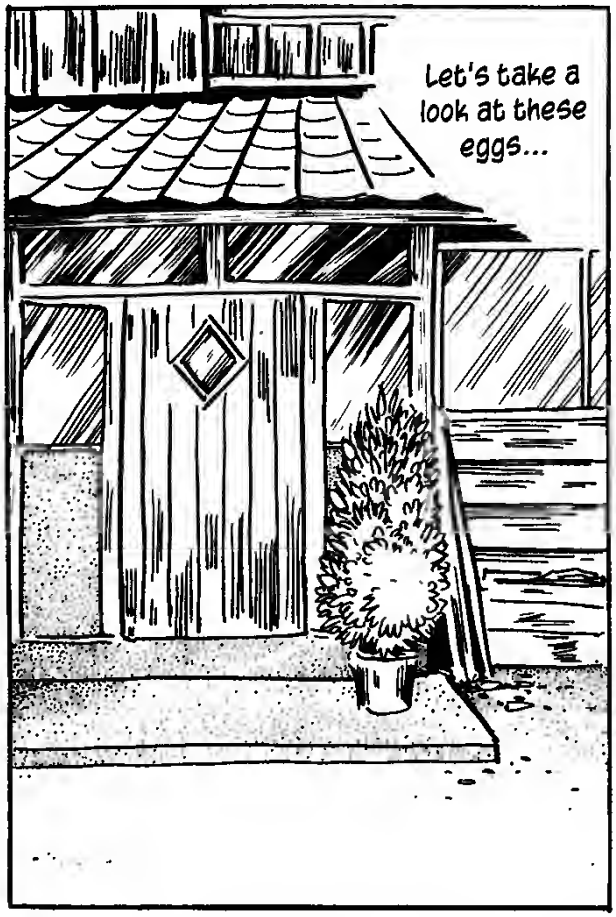


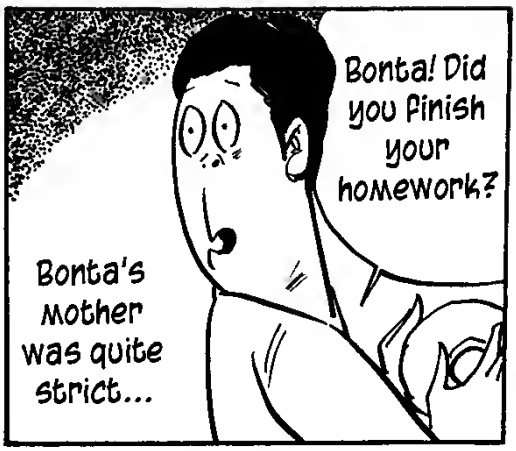
When American astronauts set foot on the Moon for the first time, a space insect with a remarkable intelligence hastened to lay eggs on their space suits. Some of its eggs, despite the journey they had endured, landed on little Bonta's fingernail. They probably got there through the cake his grandfather brought him from the United States.

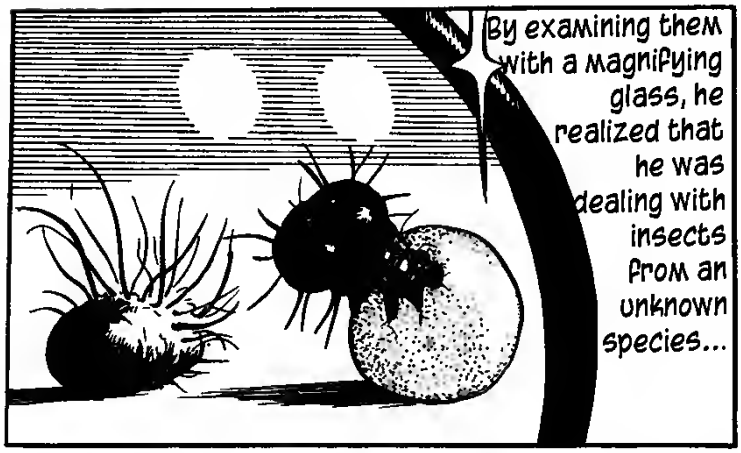


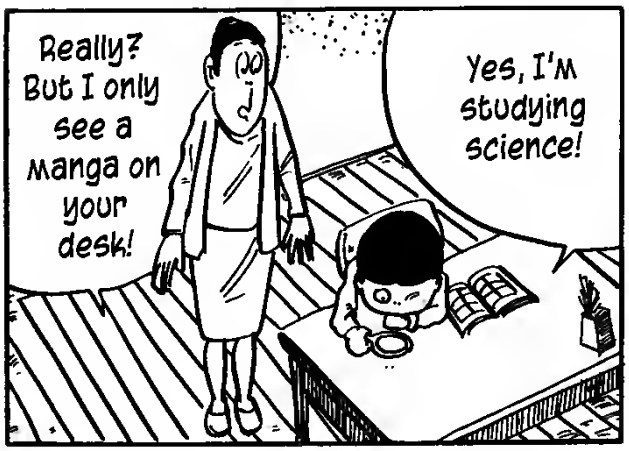

As soon as Bonta had finished reading his manga...


Puc puc
...he heard a strange noise coming from his nail. Then two tiny balls fell on his desk.

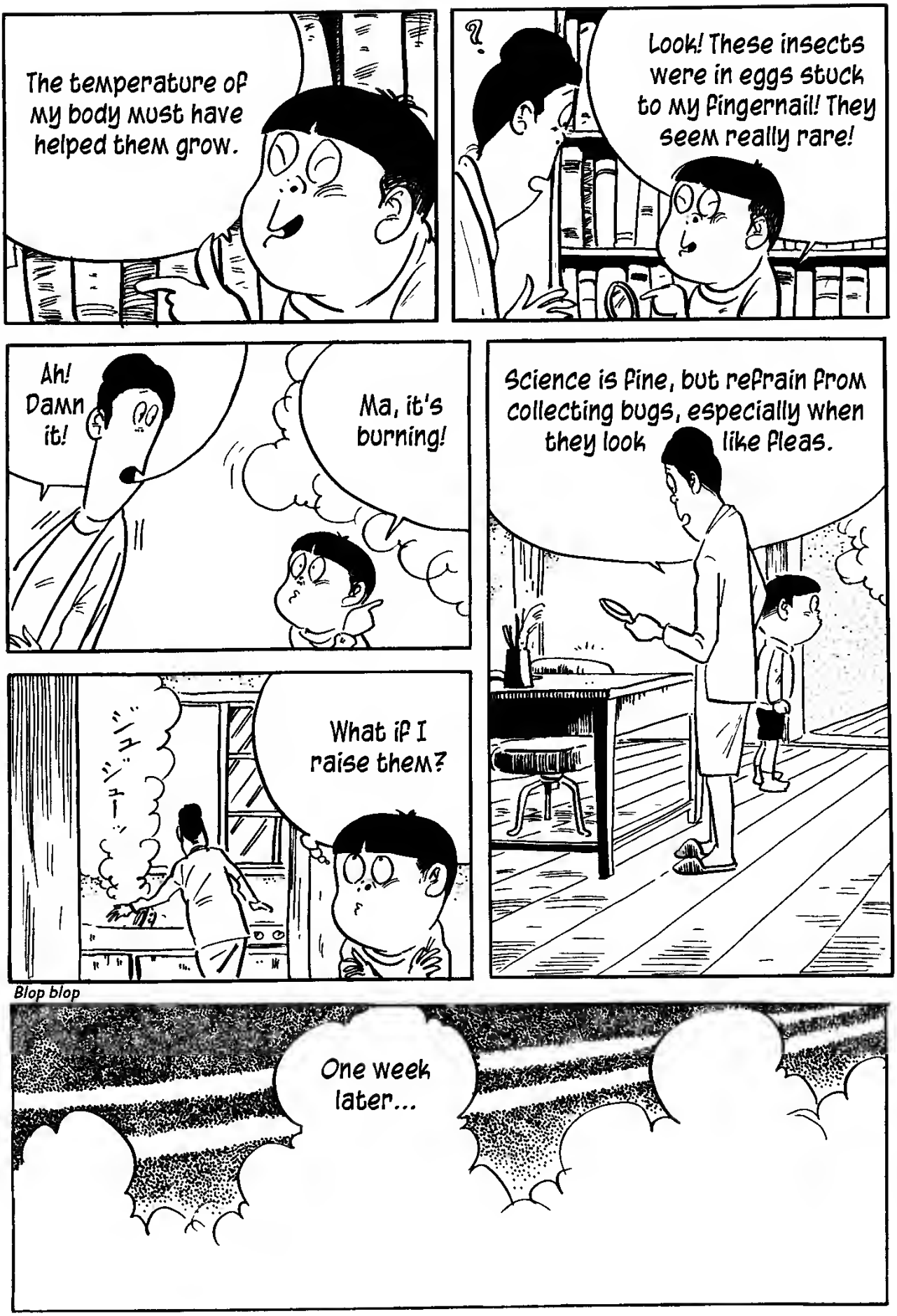

Let's take a look at these eggs...


Bonta! Did you finish your homework?
Bonta's mother was quite strict...

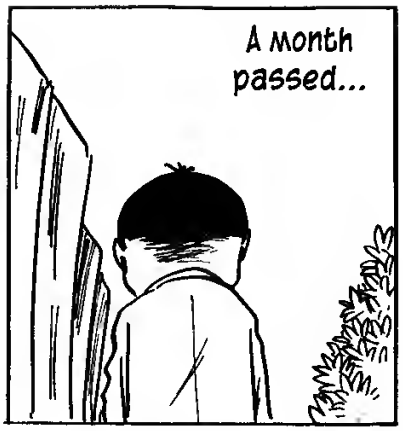

By examining them with a magnifying glass, he realized that he was dealing with insects from an unknown species...

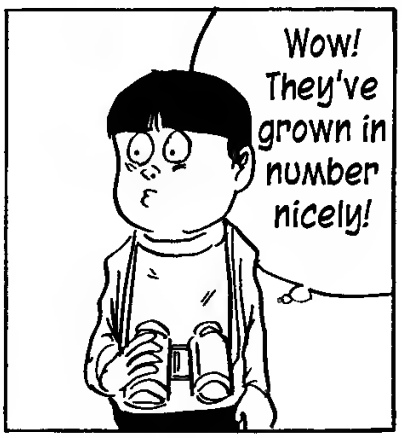

Really? But I only see a manga on your desk!
Yes, I'm studying science!

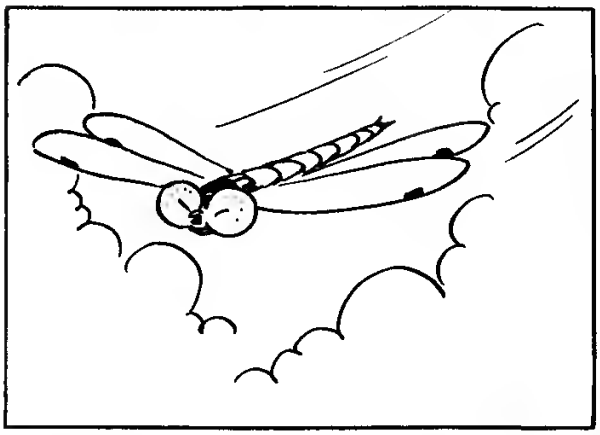
Really? With a magnifying glass?
I'm studying, Ma!

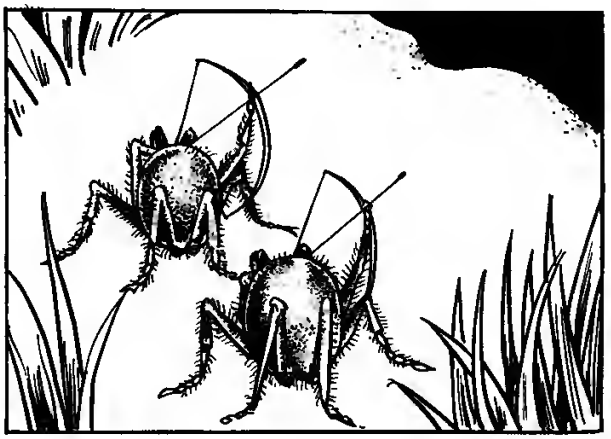

The temperature of my body must have helped them grow.
Look! These insects were in eggs stuck to my fingernail! They seem really rare!
Ah! Damn it!
Ma, it's burning!
Science is fine, but refrain from collecting bugs, especially when they look like fleas.
What if I raise them?
Blop blop
One week later...

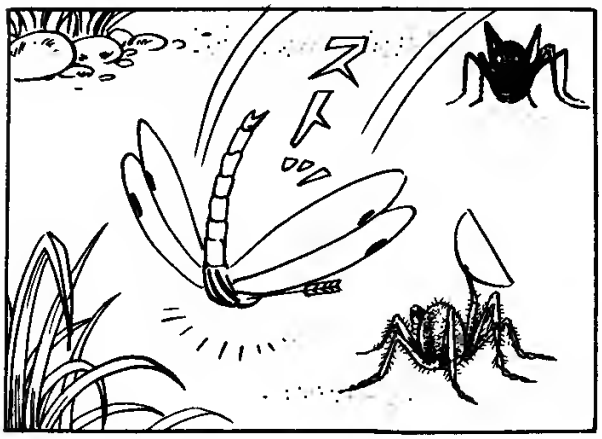
I agree with your mother.
I don't want these insects in our home anymore! Imagine if they multiply and infest us, what would you do, huh?!
...I'm going to leave them a little food in advance.
I'll lock them in a matchbox and...
Alright, I under-stand...
No, not in the trash...
If I throw them away, it's best if it's in an isolated location.
Hop!


A month passed...


Wow! They've grown in number nicely!



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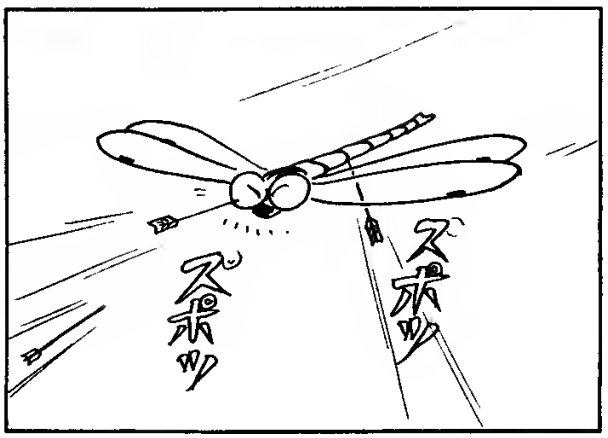
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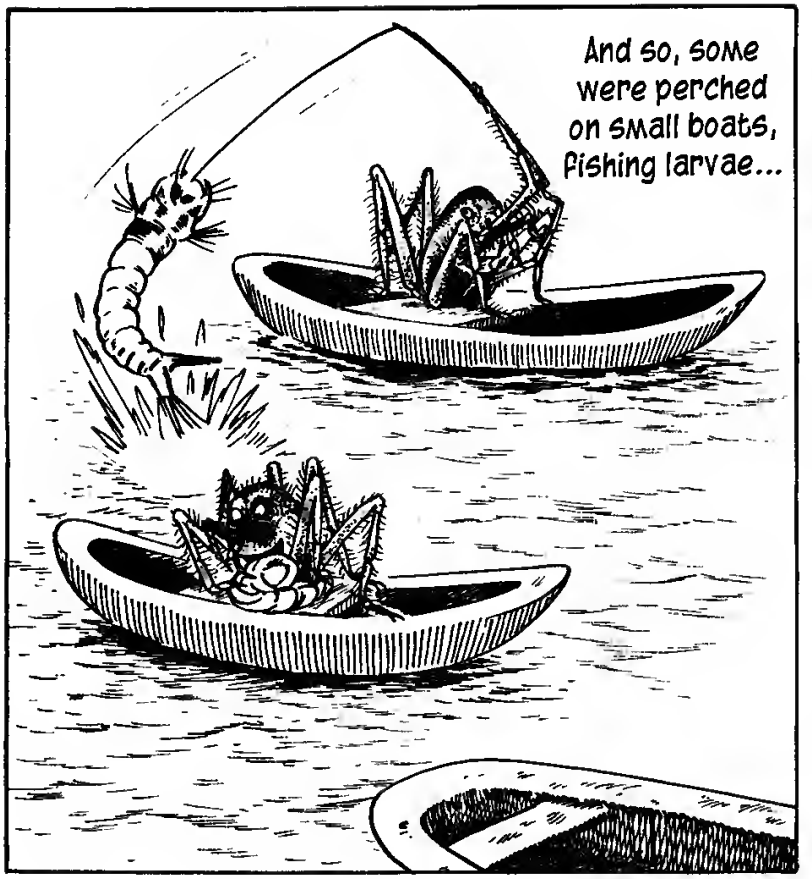
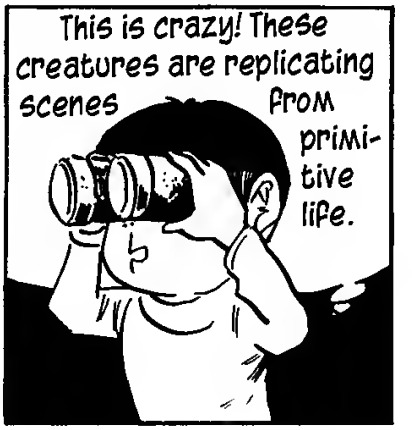
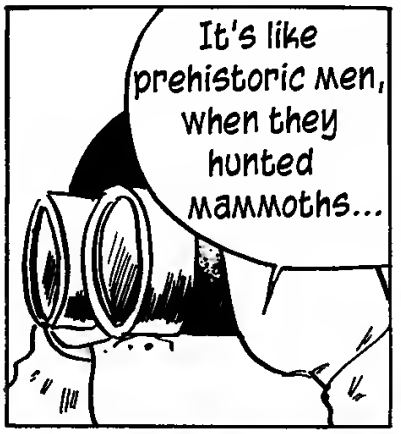
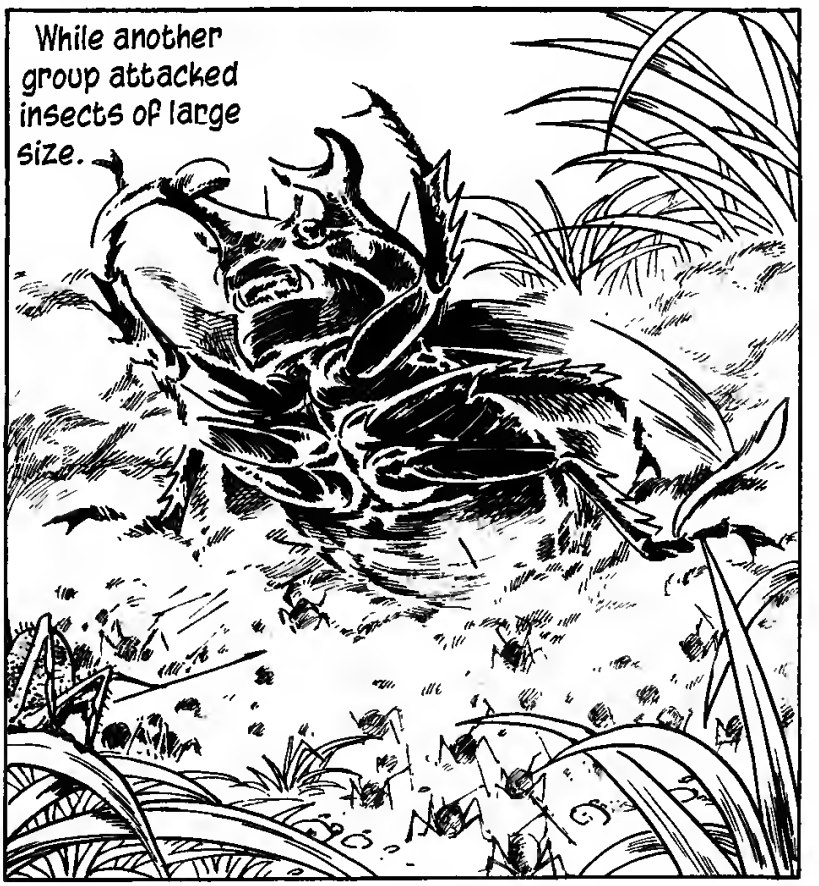
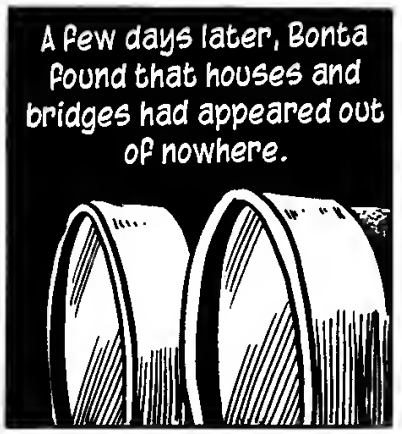

And so, some were perched on small boats, fishing larvae...

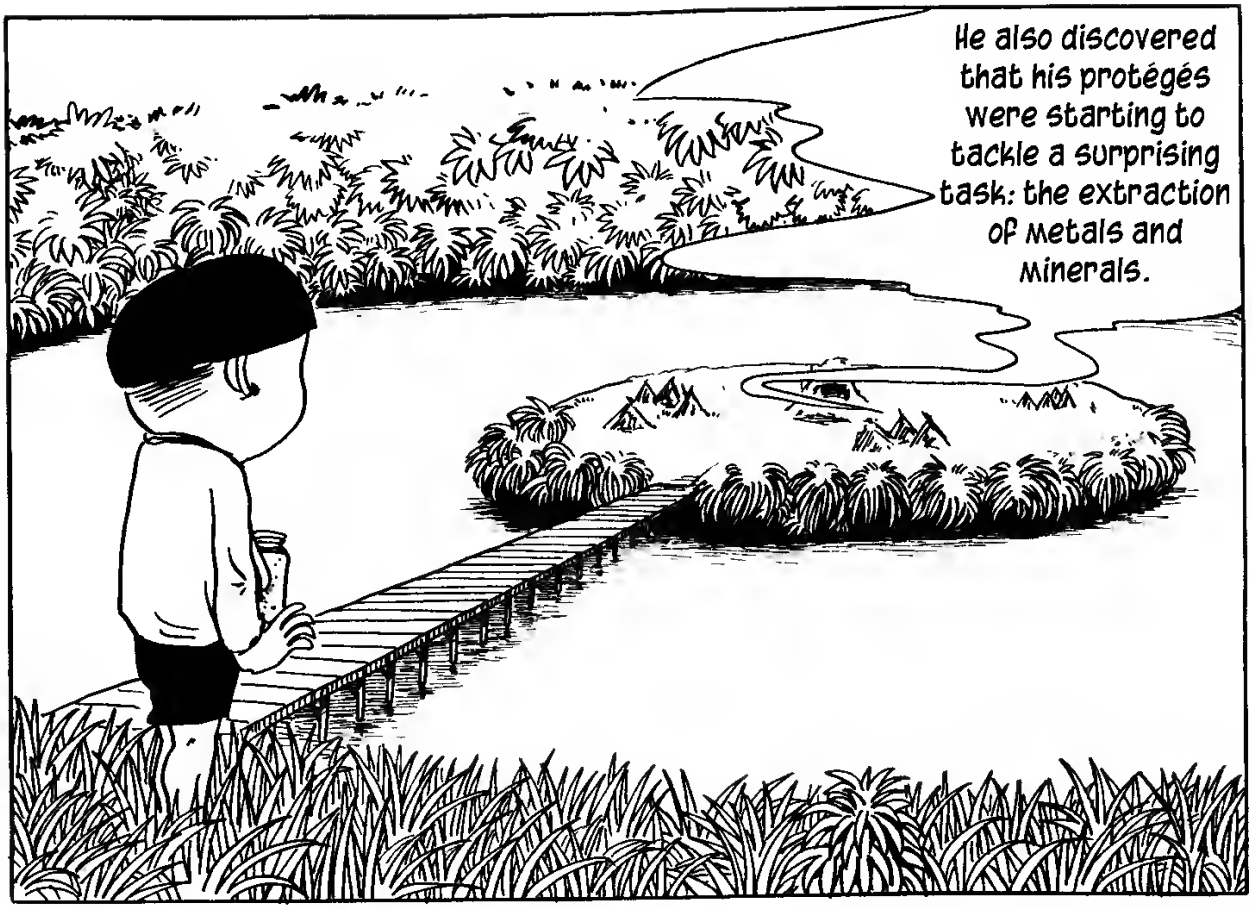
Croc croc

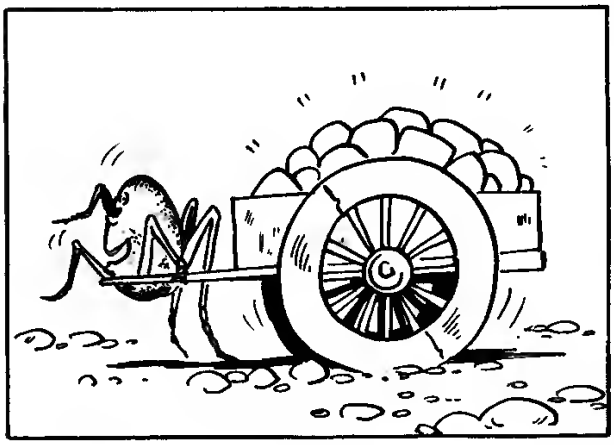

This is crazy! These creatures are replicating scenes from primitive life.

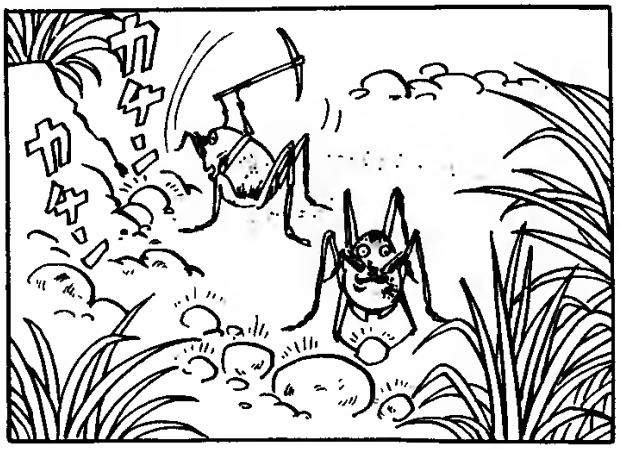

It's like prehistoric men, when they hunted mammoths...


While another group attacked insects of large size.


A few days later, Bonta found that houses and bridges had appeared out of nowhere.


He also discovered that his protégés were starting to tackle a surprising task: the extraction of metals and minerals.

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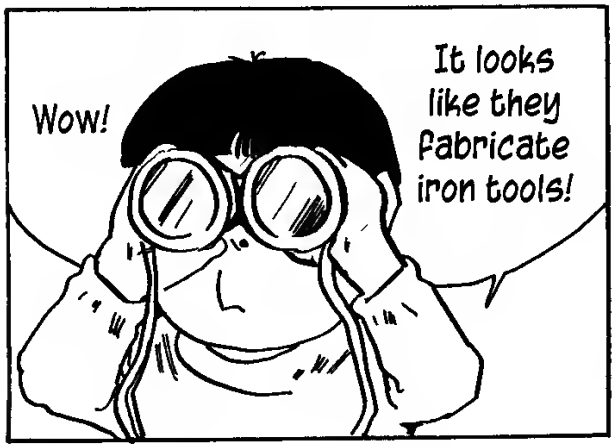
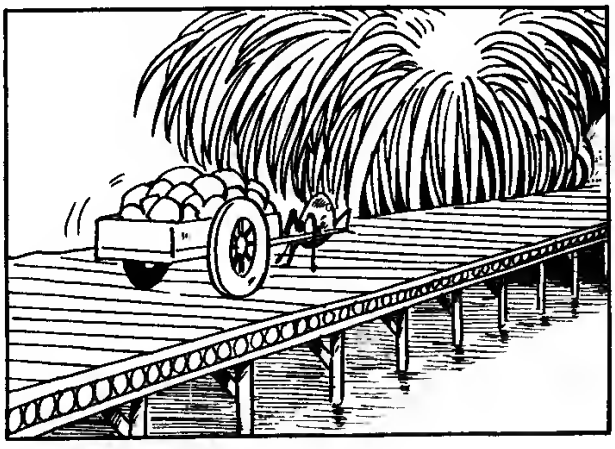
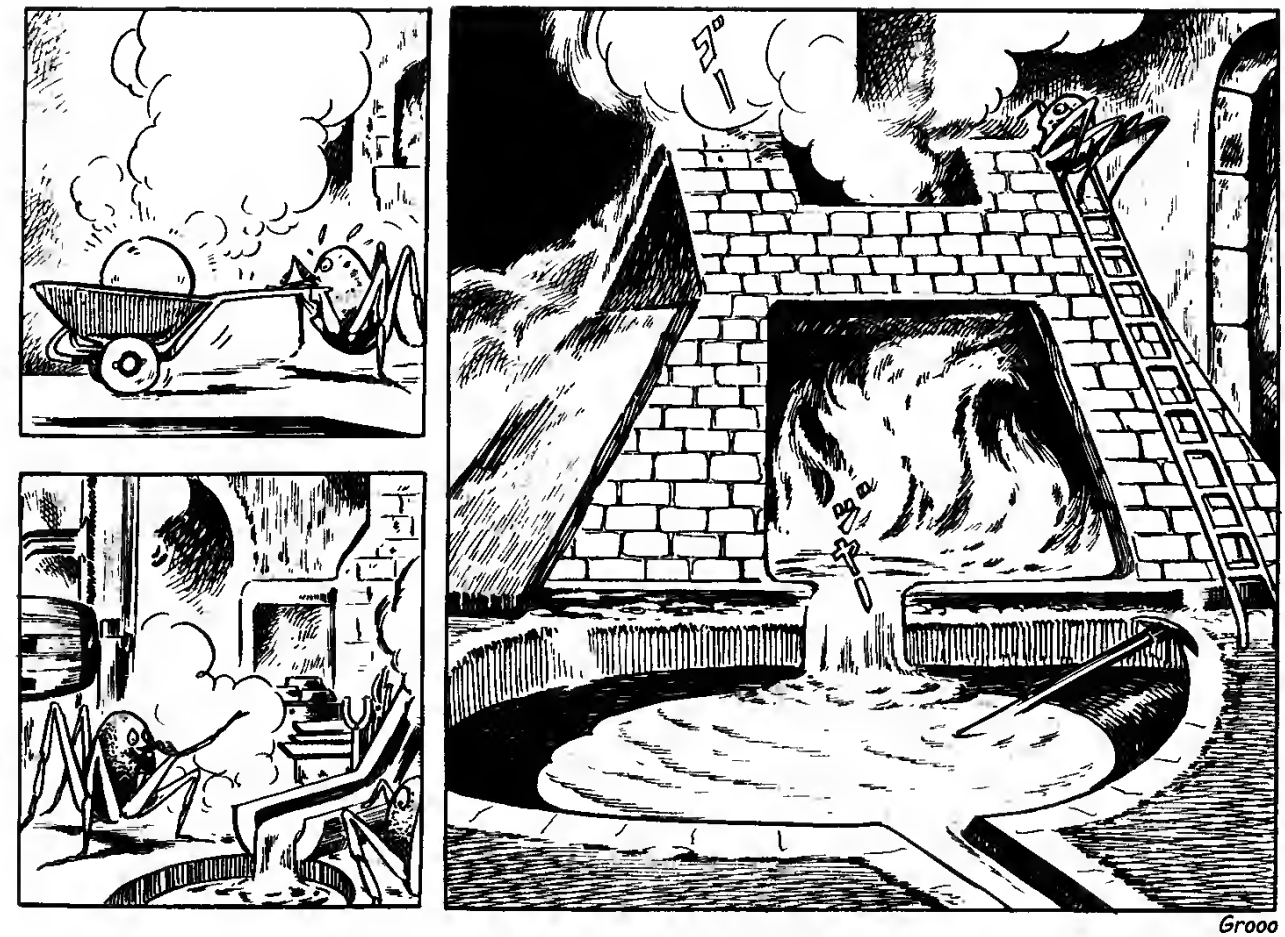
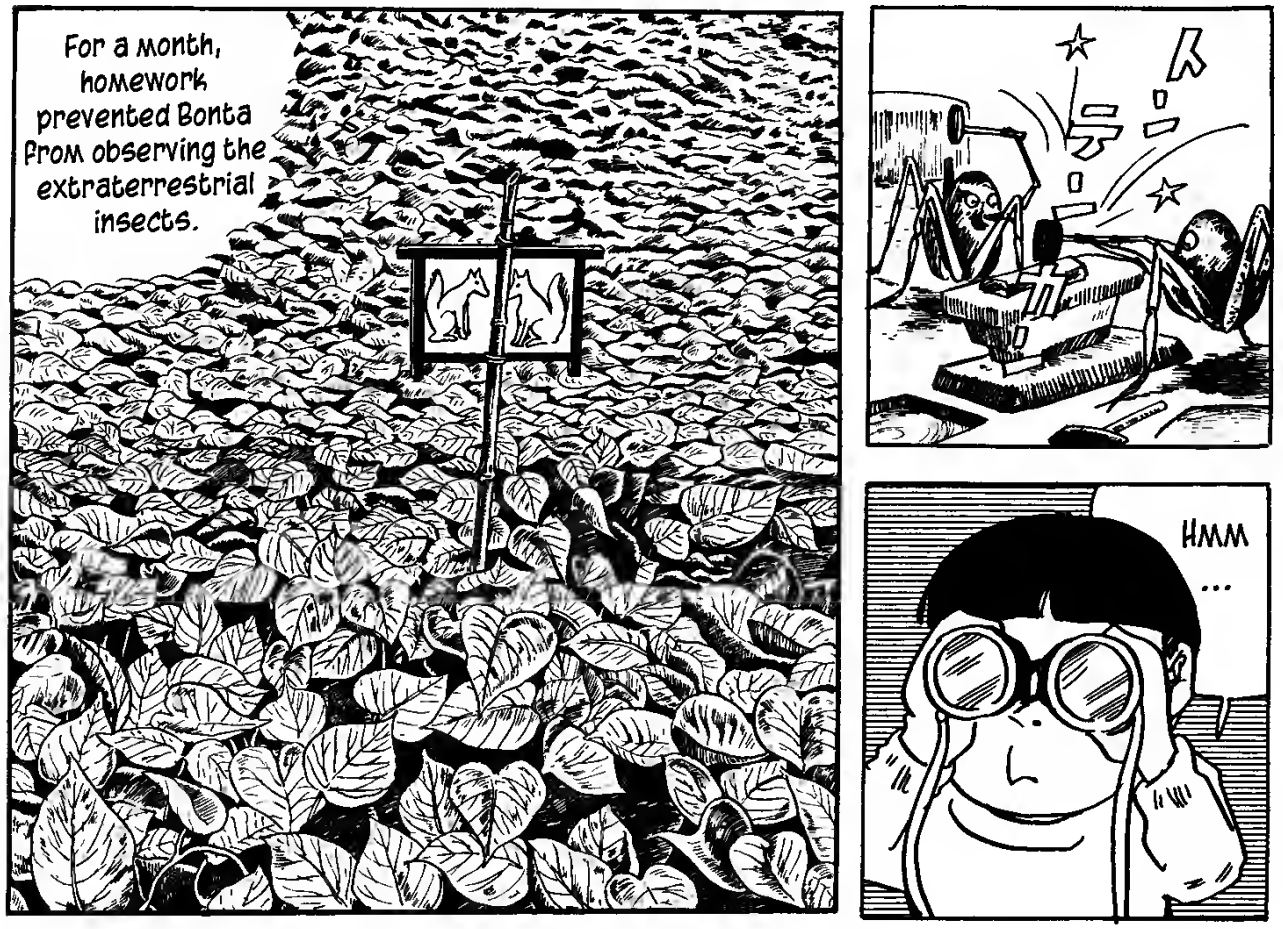
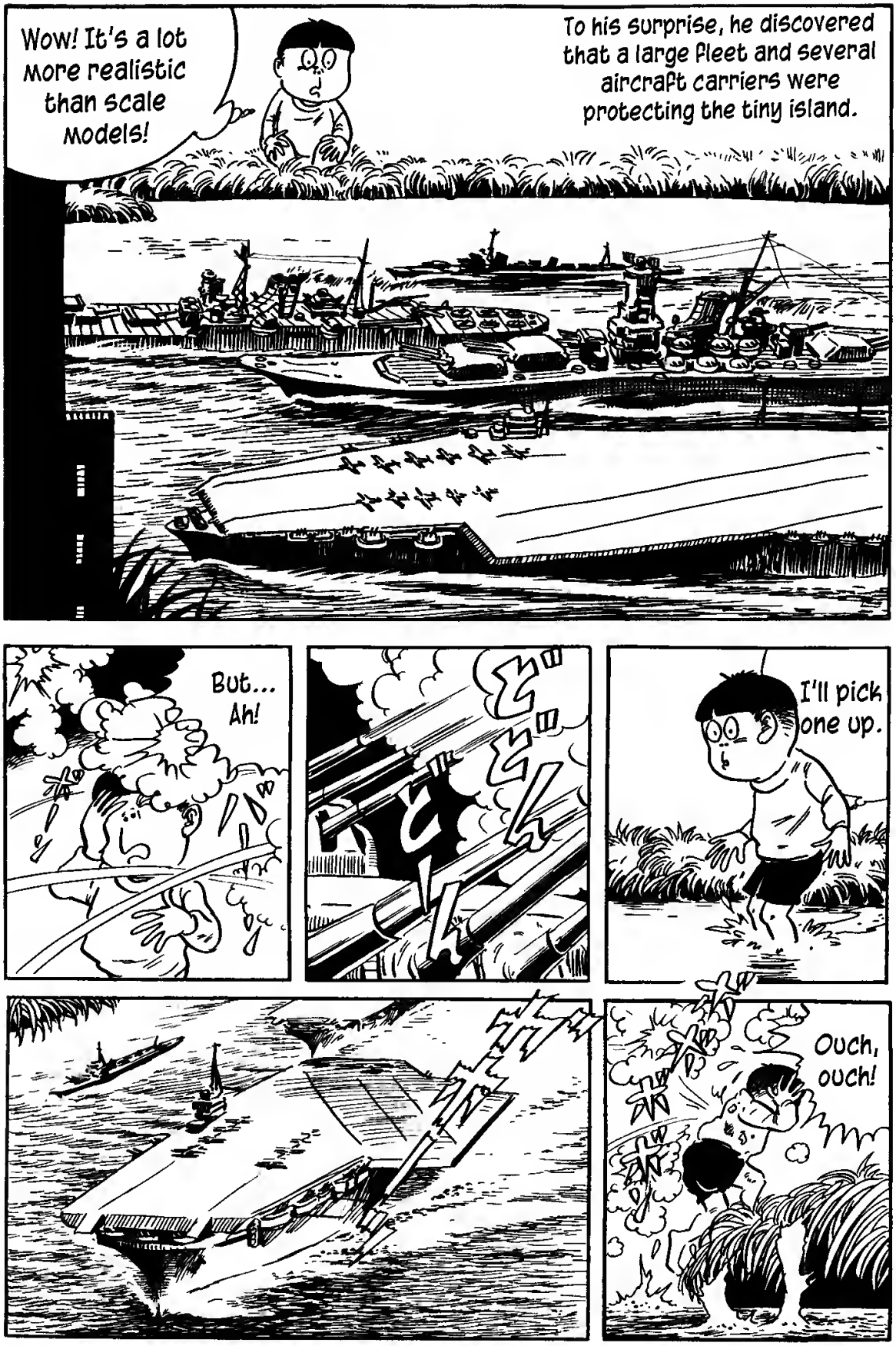
カサ・・・


Wow!
It looks like they fabricate iron tools!

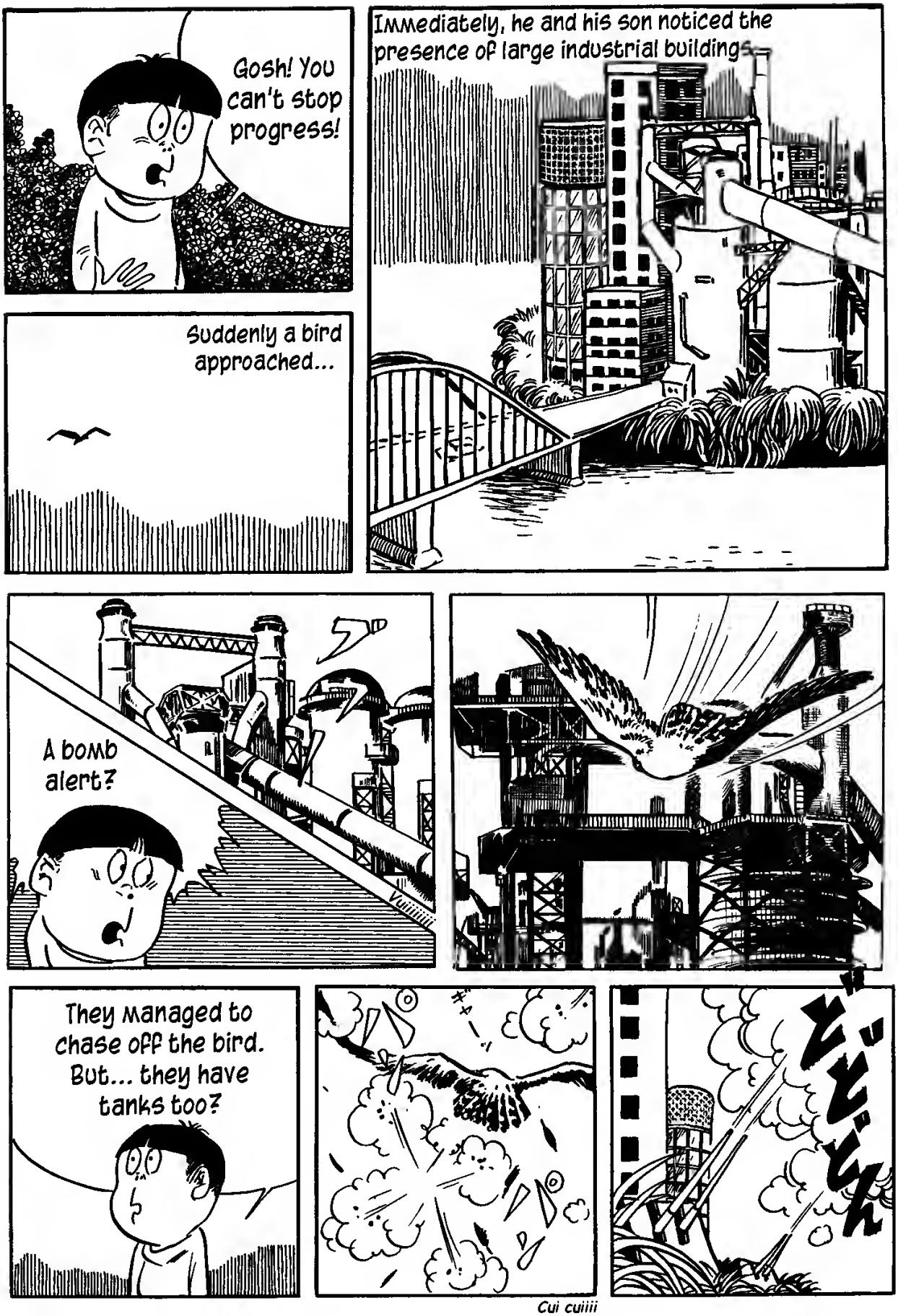


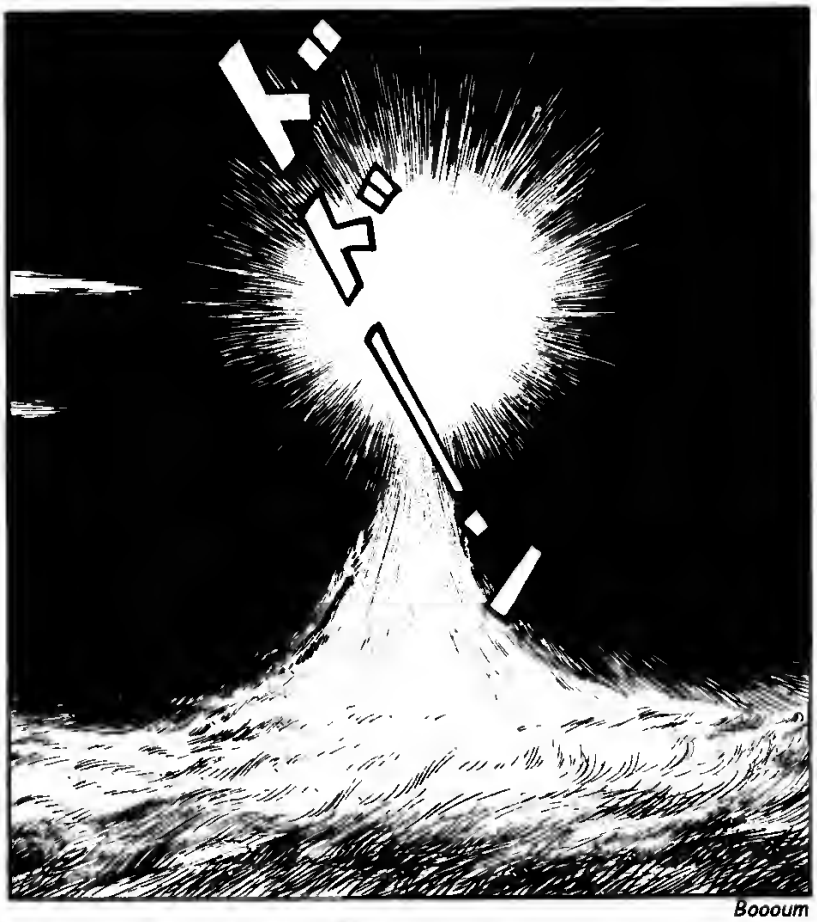

ブー
Grooo


For a month, homework prevented Bonta from observing the extraterrestrial insects.
HMM ...


Wow! It's a lot more realistic than scale models!
To his surprise, he discovered that a large fleet and several aircraft carriers were protecting the tiny island.
But... Ah!
I'll pick one up.
Ouch, ouch!

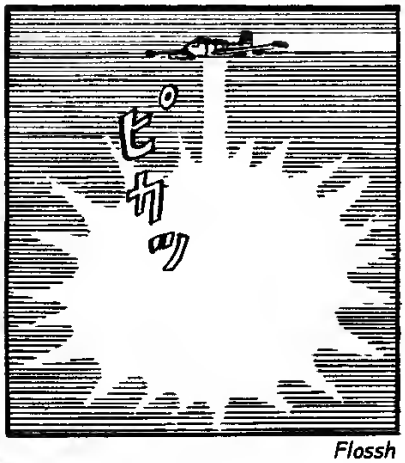
They have airplanes too?!
What?!
Aah! Bombs!!
The following Sunday, Bonta's father, in accordance with what his little mustache might suggest, was extremely careful.
This is a joke, my boy!
It was the insects that banged you up like that?!
Okay, next Sunday, I'll take care of them.
I swear it's true! They have remote-controlled airplanes!


Gosh! You can't stop progress!
Immediately, he and his son noticed the presence of large industrial buildings
Suddenly a bird approached...
A bomb alert?
They managed to chase off the bird. But... they have tanks too?
Cui cuiiii

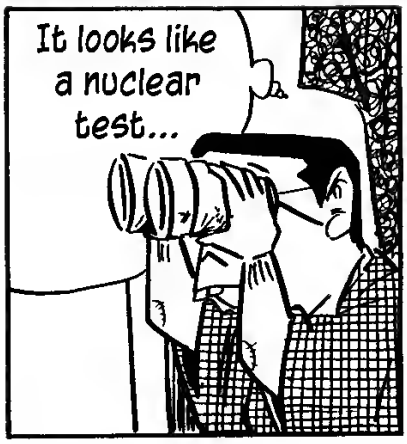


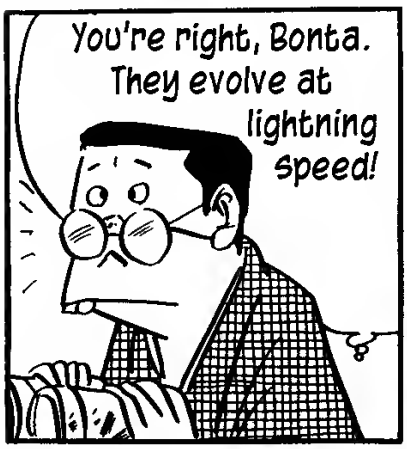
Boooum

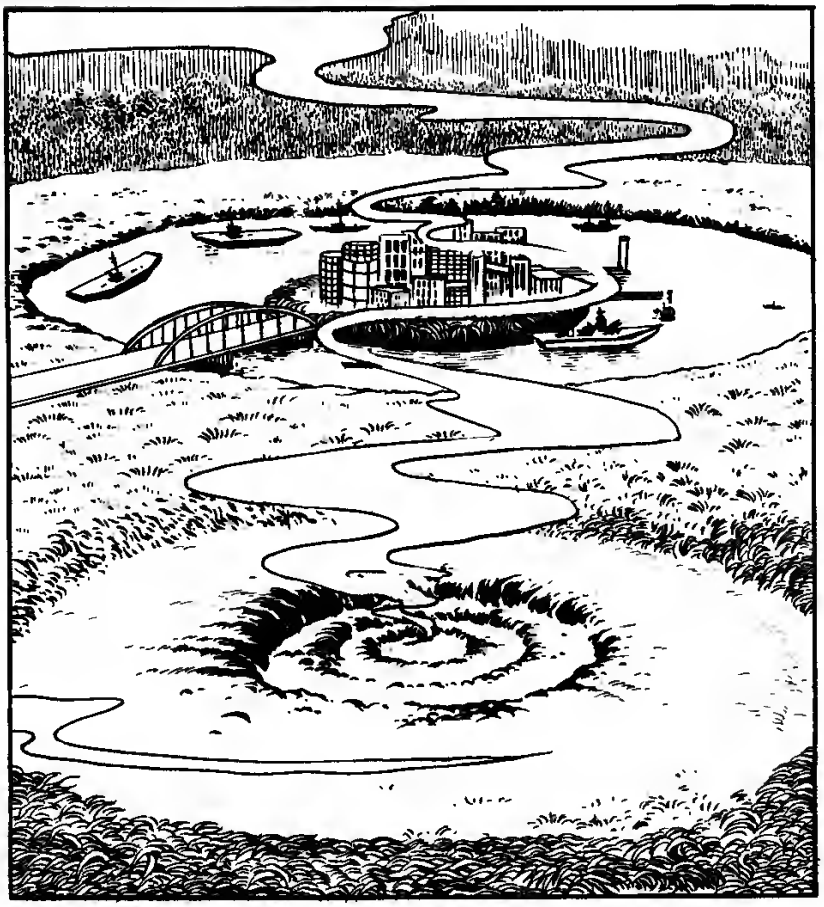
Vroooo

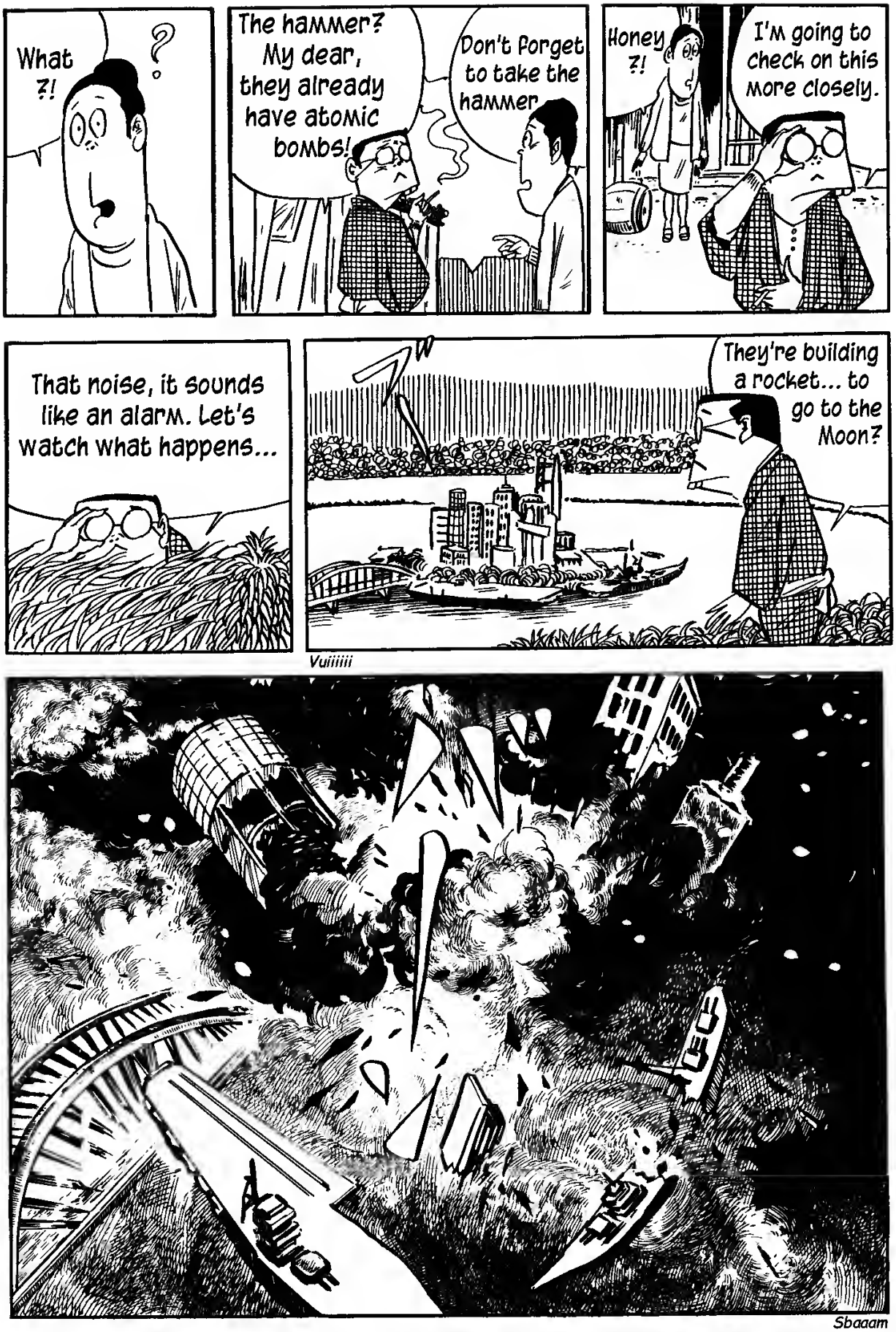


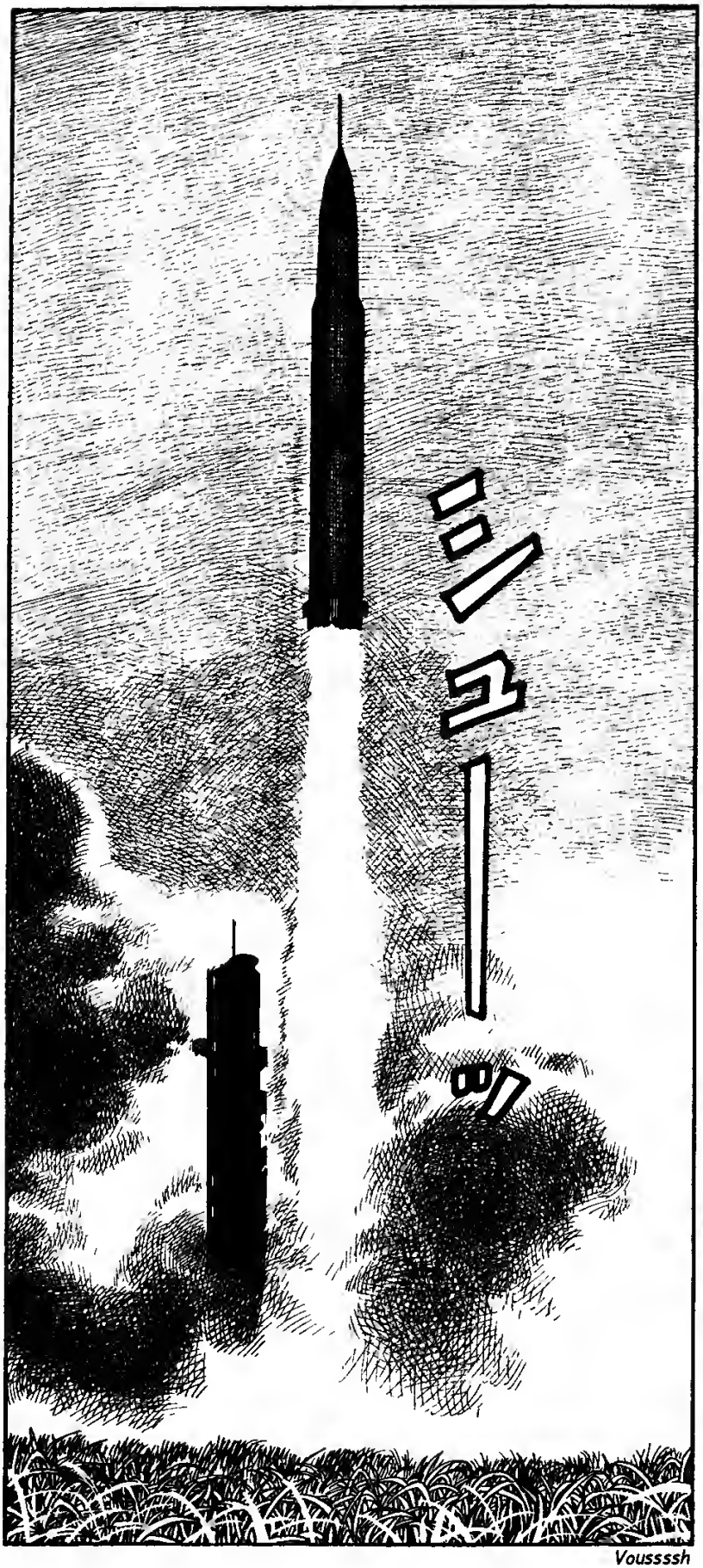
Flossh








What ?!
The hammer? My dear, they already have atomic bombs!
Don't forget to take the hammer.
Honey ?!
I'm going to check on this more closely.
That noise, it sounds like an alarm. Let's watch what happens...
They're building a rocket... to go to the Moon?
Vuiiiiii
Sbaaam



Vousssh

Brooo

Brouf

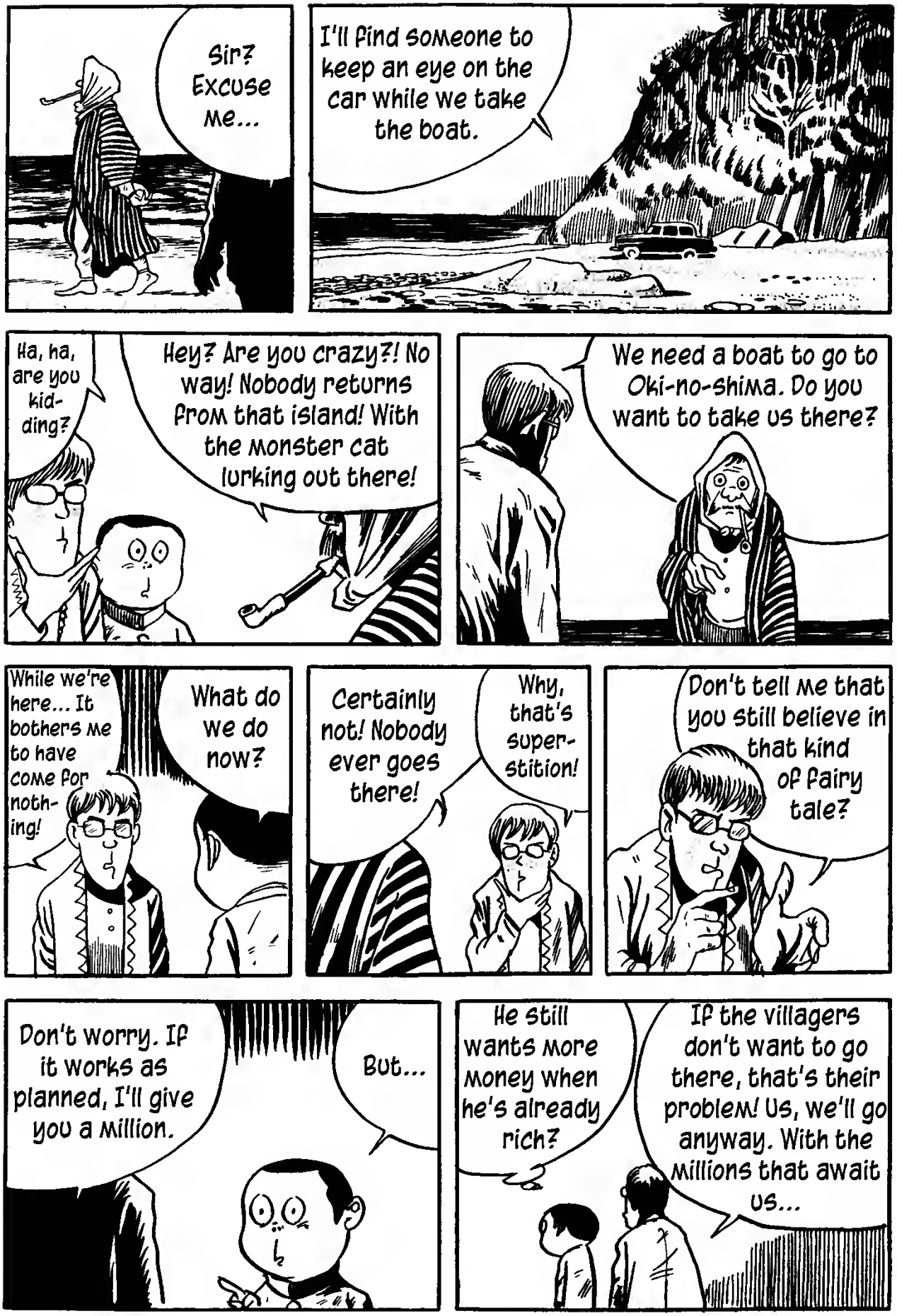
The island was in ruins...
My God, it really is a rocket!
In just four months, they managed to achieve what took humanity hundreds of thousands of years to accomplish.
An eminent scientist, a university professor, tried to give an explanation...
All the insects were gone.
Their knowledge allowed them to build a rocket to go home.
Hmm, I see...
The next day, Bonta and his father long remained pensive, staring at the now abandoned city of their mysterious neighbors...

Nekomata, the Mutant Cat

Fellow readers, do you believe in metamorphosis?

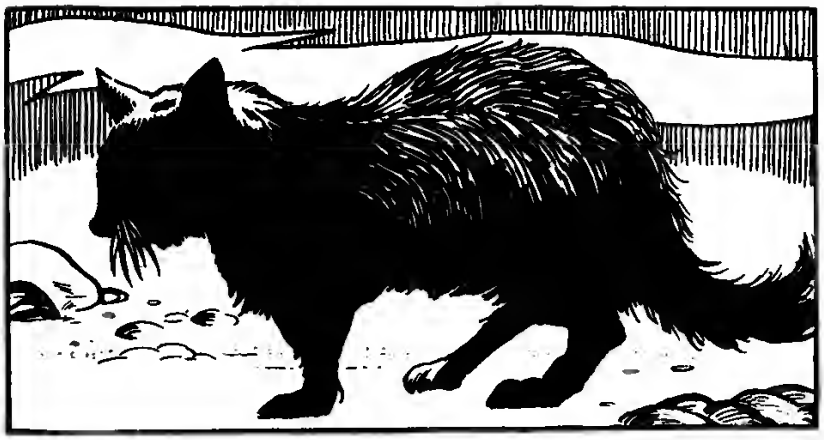
"Bewilder the human mind?" What does it mean?
"The name Nekomata - or cat with a split tail - refers to the creature born of the mutation of a wild cat over 30 years of age. The beast has, besides a double-ended queue, the dangerous power to bewilder the human mind..." Encyclopedia of Monsters.
...Or do they say incomprehensible things? That means they would be able to speak... Oh, but if they have mutated, they should be able to...
Perhaps these creatures manipulate people... But how? By entering their thoughts?...
How about a car ride?
Hey, up there!
Alright, I'm coming.
Come on! You won't have to pay anything, I'm inviting you!
Well, my lazy neighbor...

We will be visiting Oki-no-shima island, a rock about 10 km from here.
By the way, where we going?
Vrooom
During the war, there was a military base built there. Since then, there is millions of yen's worth of iron scrap just lying around out there.
What's so special about this island?
The next day...
Uh ... And then?
Well, you're gonna help me retrieve some.

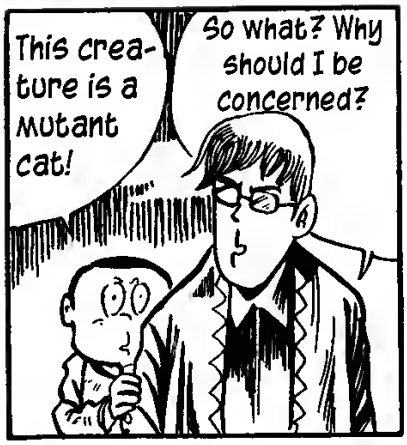

Sir? Excuse me...
I'll find someone to keep an eye on the car while we take the boat.
Ha, ha, are you kid-ding?
Hey? Are you crazy?! No way! Nobody returns from that island! With the monster cat lurking out there!
We need a boat to go to Oki-no-shima. Do you want to take us there?
While we're here... It bothers me to have come for noth-ing!
What do we do now?
Certainly not! Nobody ever goes there!
Why, that's super-stition!
Don't tell me that you still believe in that kind of fairy tale?
Don't worry. If it works as planned, I'll give you a million.
But...
He still wants more money when he's already rich?
If the villagers don't want to go there, that's their problem! Us, we'll go anyway. With the millions that await us...

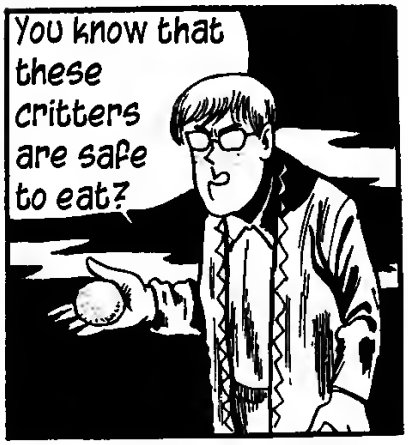
They took an old barrel boat to reach the island for a first reconnaissance.
It's still far away... It looked closer to me.
After a day's journey, they set foot on the island.
Hey, hey, look at this! We'll make a fortune, with all that iron scrap!

Really? There were that many?
It looks like... cat skulls.
What's this, on the floor?
I guess they died of hunger, in this abandoned place...
Huh?! A storm?!
The wind is still too strong to leave.
I'm hungry!
Indeed, a hurricane struck the island and raged for three days.

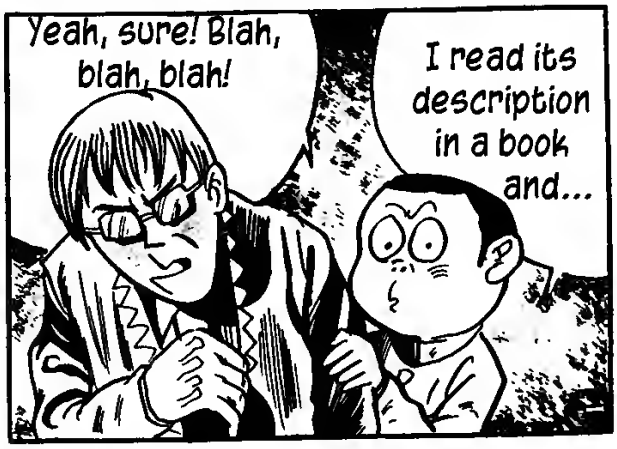


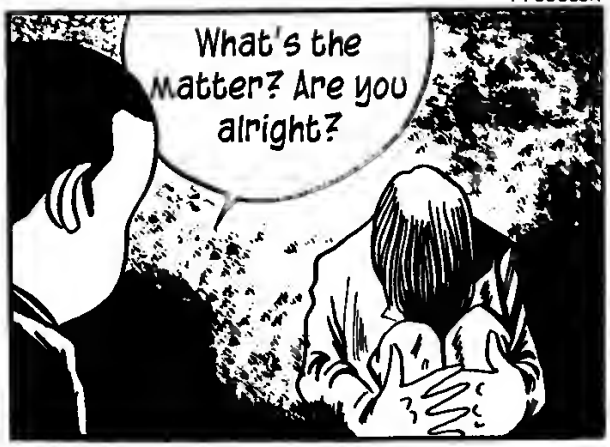
Miaoooou

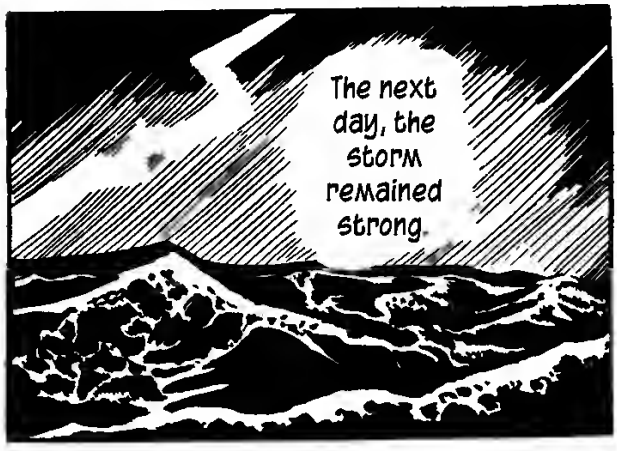




Froooosh







Shut your trap! I'm telling you to get lost!
You... you ate the cat?!
I am not feeling very well. You better stay away from me.
Though I warned him...
Huh? This sounds like...
Meow
Meow
How is this possible? I thought they were all dead!
That's it! This really is a cat meowing!

I'm here to check on you.
What do you want, now?
A cat skull! Ugh!
But I already told you to leave me alone! Begone!
I'm not doing very well. A kind of large tumorous swelling appeared on my stomach, and I can't move anymore.
That night...
...
Viuuuu
ニャーオー
ニャーオー
Meow
Meow

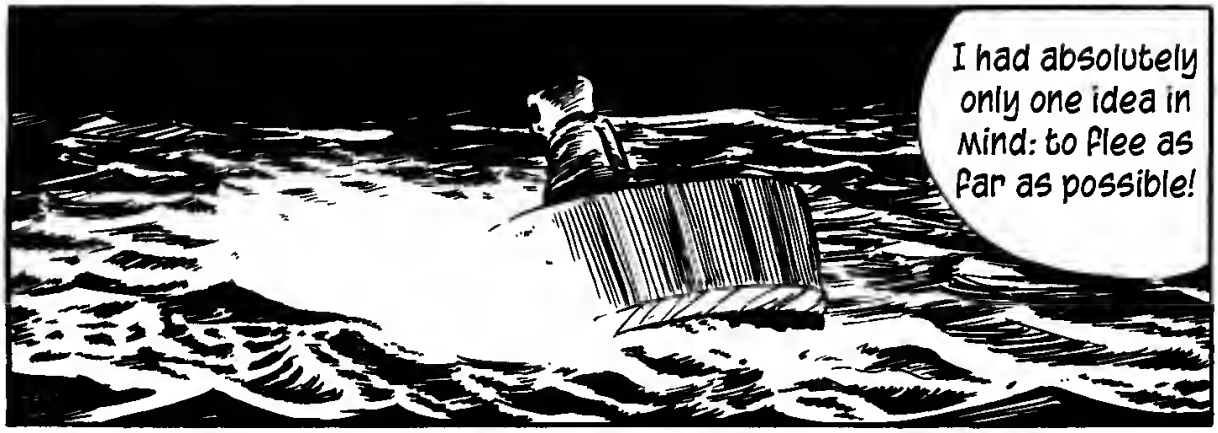
ニャーオー
Meow
ニャーオー
Meow
Ha!!
ニャーオー
All this meowing... It's coming from this room.
Meow
Leave me alone, kid! Don't you see that I'm doomed?!
ニャーオー
Meow
ニャーオー
Meow

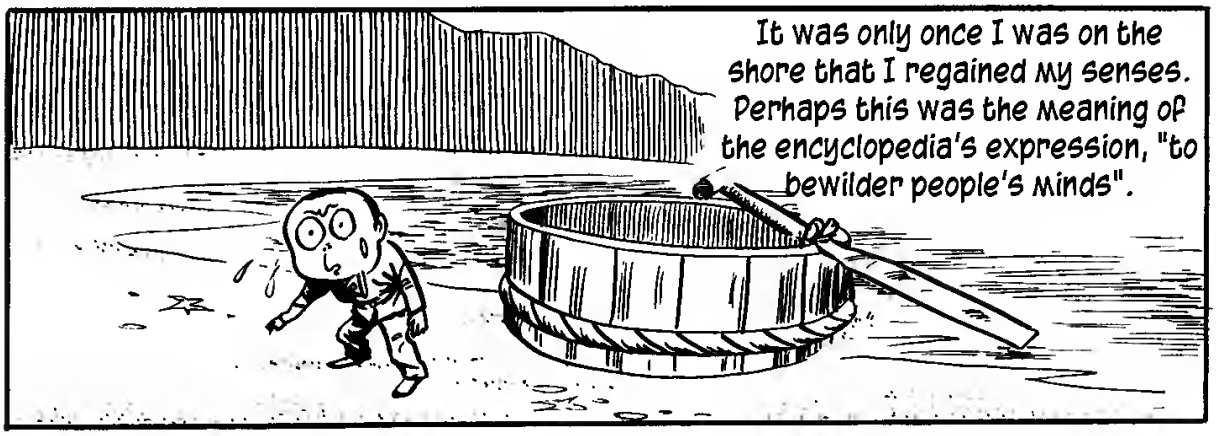
...but it's a waste of time!
At first I cut it off right away with a razor...
That damn cat head, it comes from the creature I ate. Even though I keep cutting it off, it grows back every time!
And there's no blood, nothing!
Not at all!
And... Is it painful?
I must have cut it off thirty times already...
Probably... Yet I still can't believe it! In any case...
This is truly the work of Nekomata.
It appears wherever it wants, anywhere on my body...
I feel it as it eats me from the inside, devouring every one of my cells! In fact, this head is only the tip of the iceberg!
Even if this monster has penetrated me to the marrow...
...I am ready to spend the rest of my days cutting off this damn head!

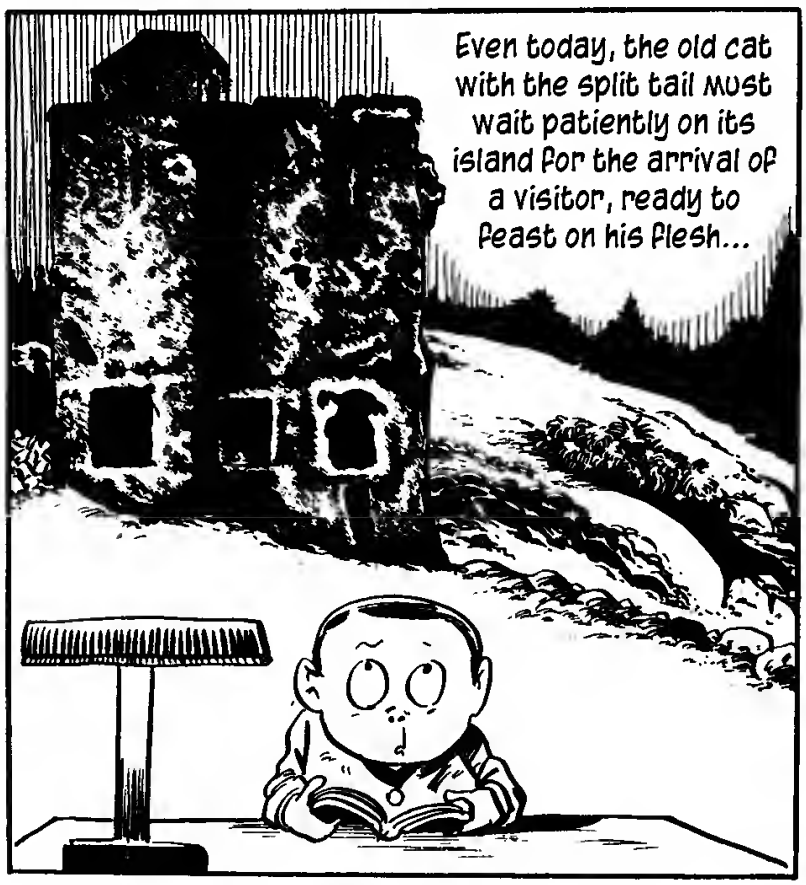
Ah! Your toe!!
Leave me to my misery. I am too tired, now, to fight this creature... Go away!
Meow
This is strange... As soon as I walk away, the meowing comes back!
ニャーゴ
Meow
That's incredible, I... I must be dreaming!
オーニャー
オーニャー
Meow
Meow
ニャーゴー
ニャーニャー
Meow
Meow
But... My goodness!

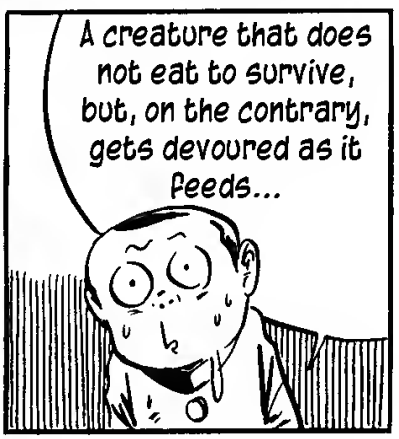
The cat, on his chest... It hit him?
For goodness' sake!!
That is just terrible!!
Aaaah
Stop it!!
Freakin' monster!
Kid, what are you doing?!
Meow
Who knows what will become of me then? And what I will be capable of doing?!
Run away, fast! Soon, this cat will completely take over my body and my soul!

Ahhh... Meeoooh...
Spof
Ha!
Come on, have guts! Don't give up the figh...
I don't know how, but I soon found myself on the barrel boat on the way to the mainland.
Mraaaouh


I had absolutely only one idea in mind: to flee as far as possible!

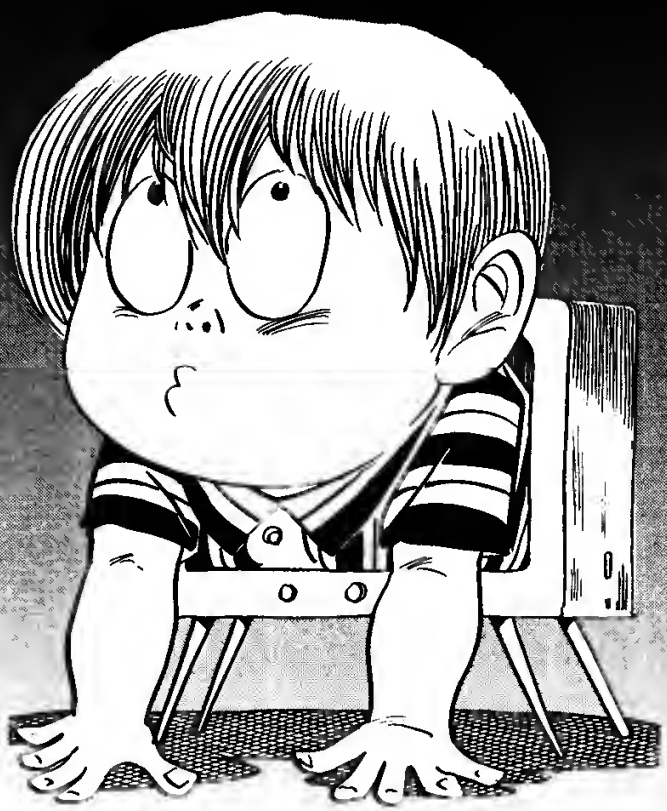

It was only once I was on the shore that I regained my senses. Perhaps this was the meaning of the encyclopedia's expression, "to bewilder people's minds".

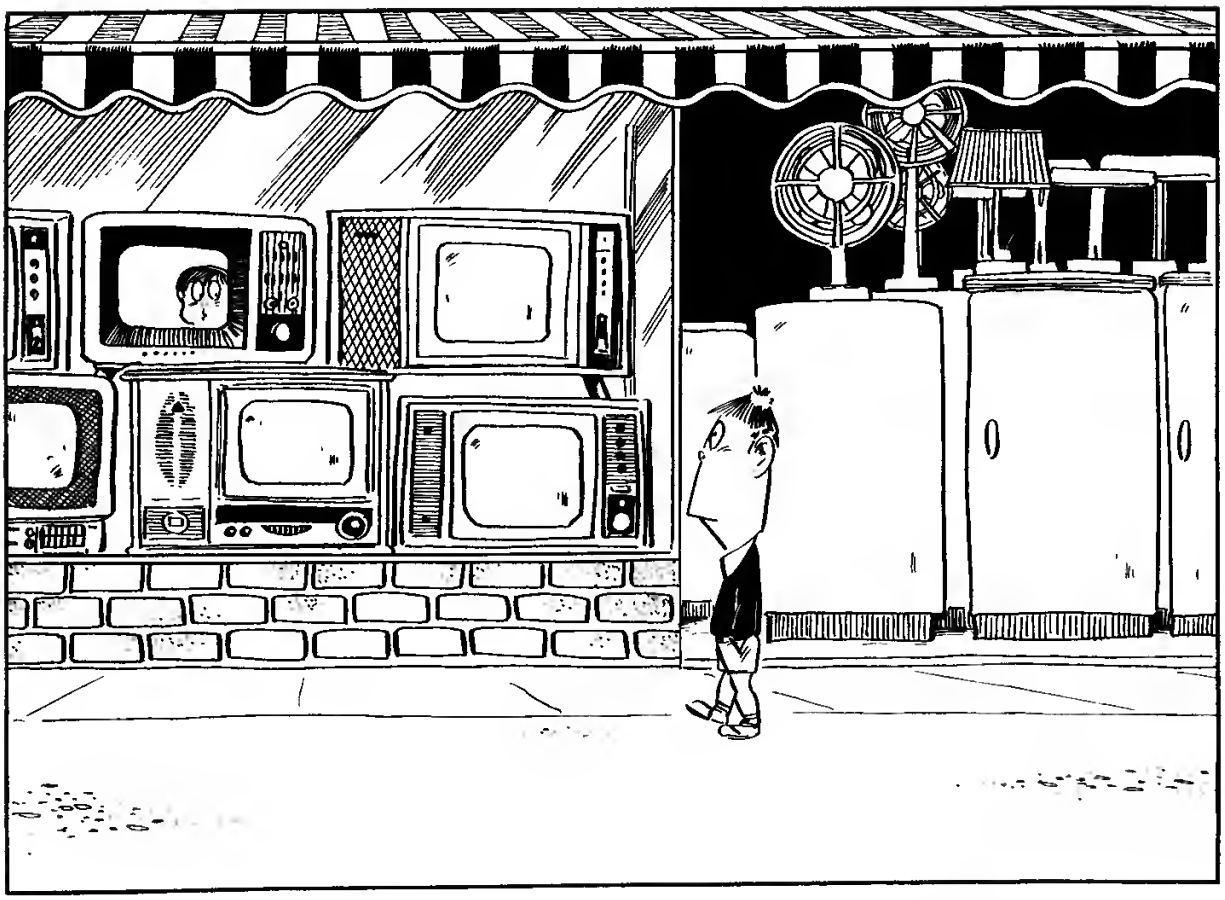

Even today, the old cat with the split tail must wait patiently on its island for the arrival of a visitor, ready to feast on his flesh...


A creature that does not eat to survive, but, on the contrary, gets devoured as it feeds...

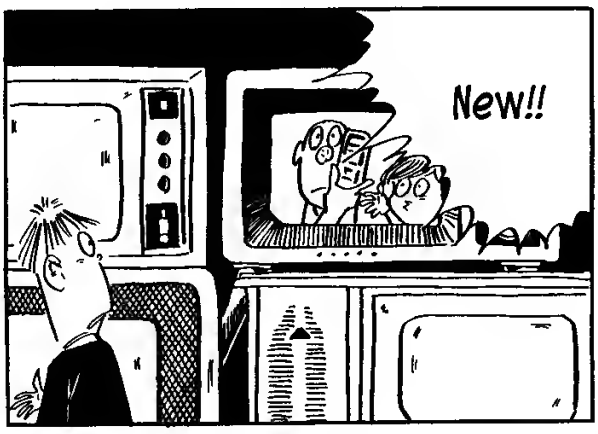
This is really creepy!

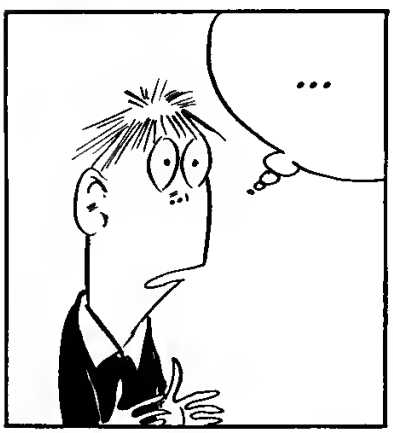
The TV Kid





Discover the chocolate "Léo" from the chocolatier Mizuki!!


New!!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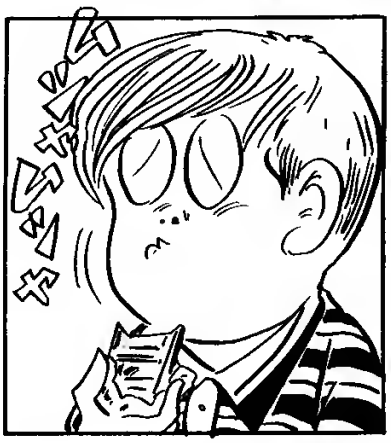
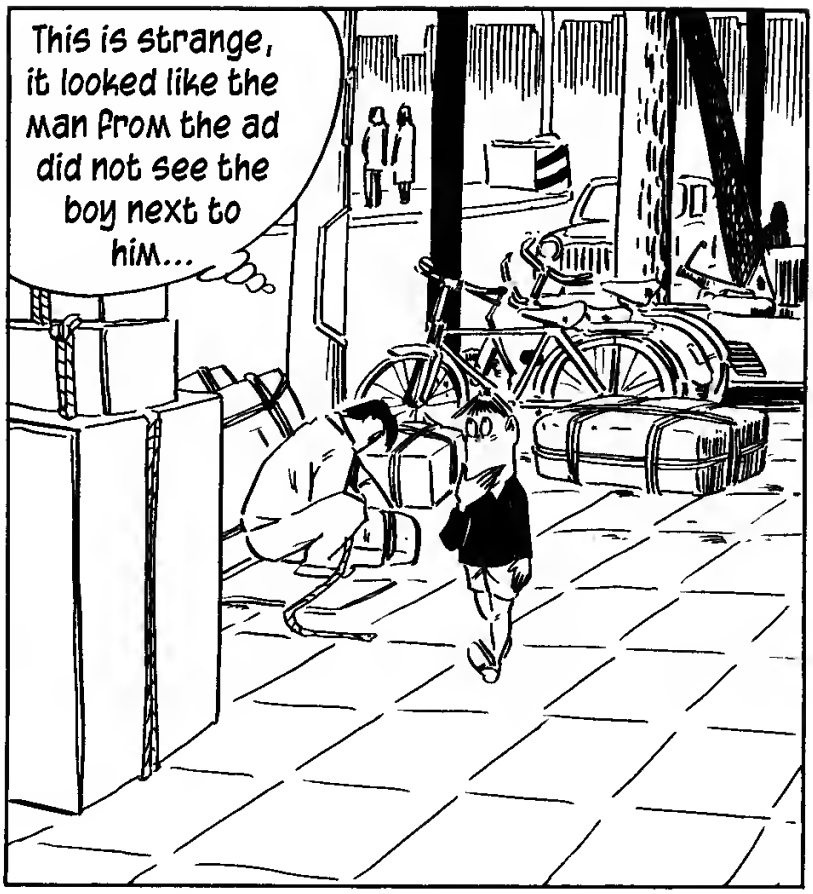
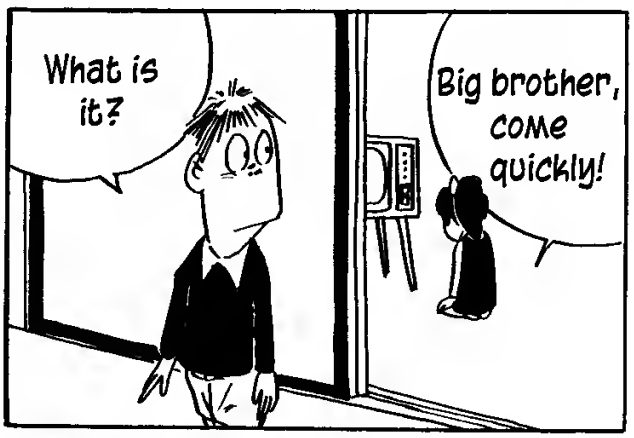


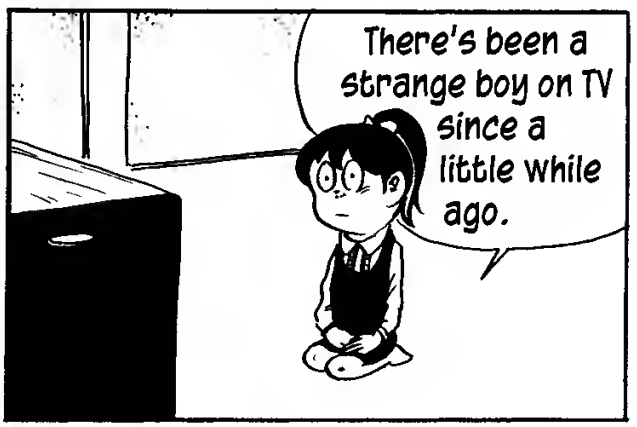
What a funny feeling!

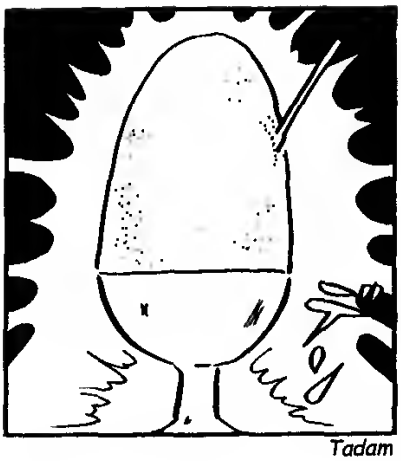

This is strange, it looked like the man from the ad did not see the boy next to him...

Hey there!

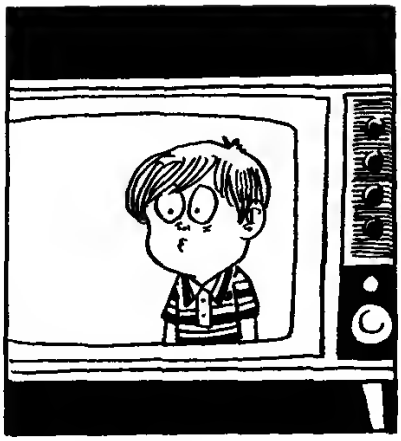
But that's the one I saw this morning, on the store's TV!
He eats all of the cakes from the advertise-ments...


What is it?
Big brother, come quickly!

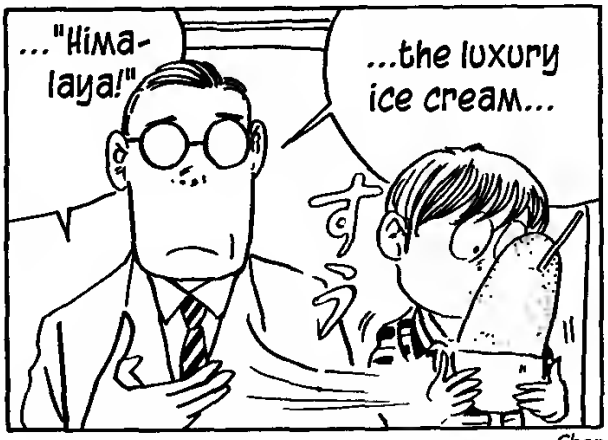

There's been a strange boy on TV since a little while ago.



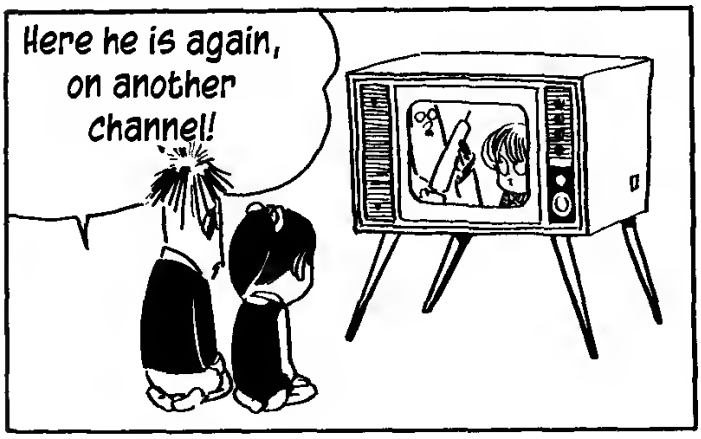
Tadam

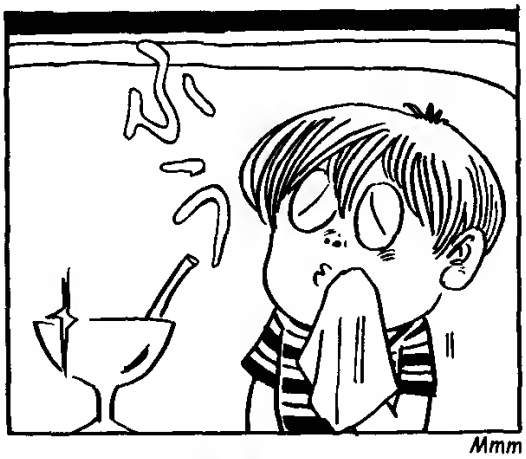


Miam miam

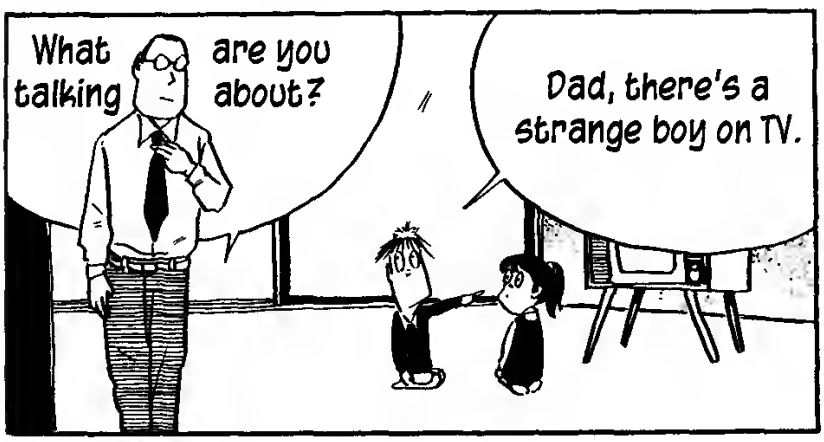


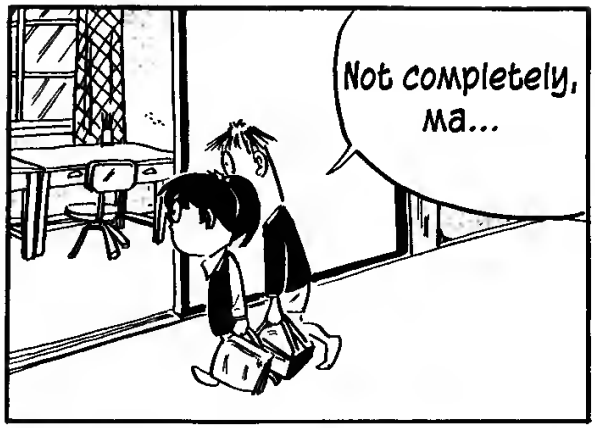
Chop

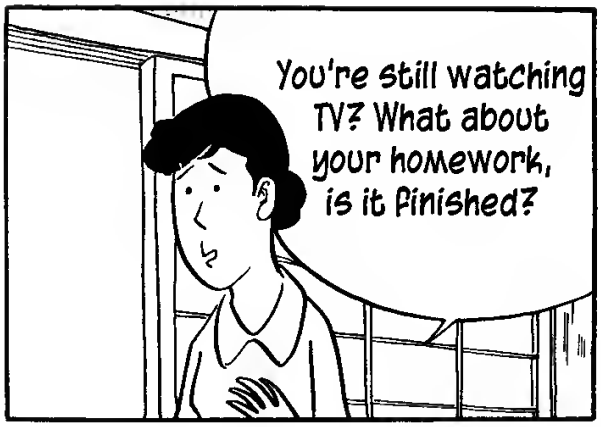


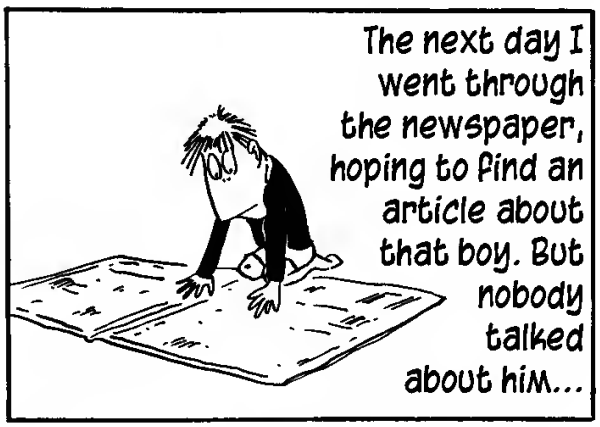


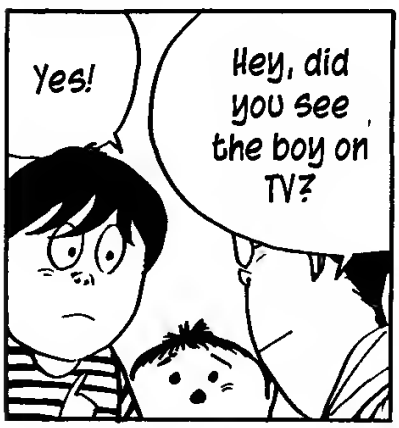
Mmm

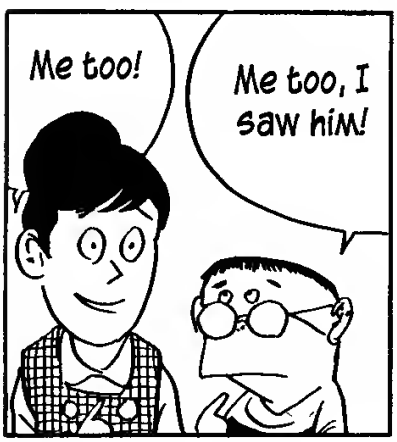


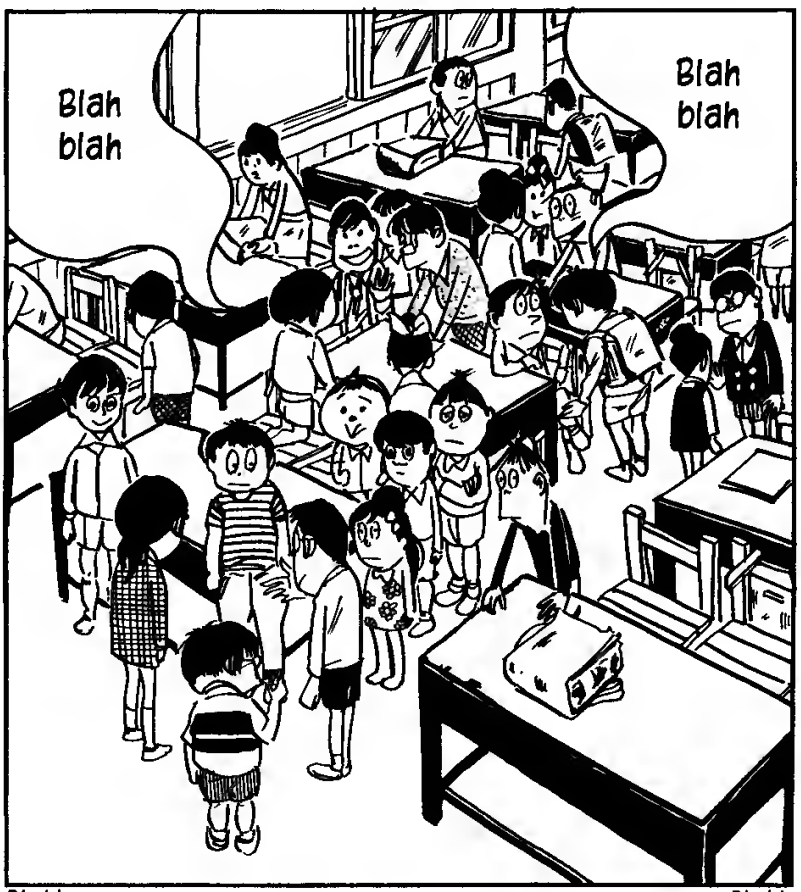






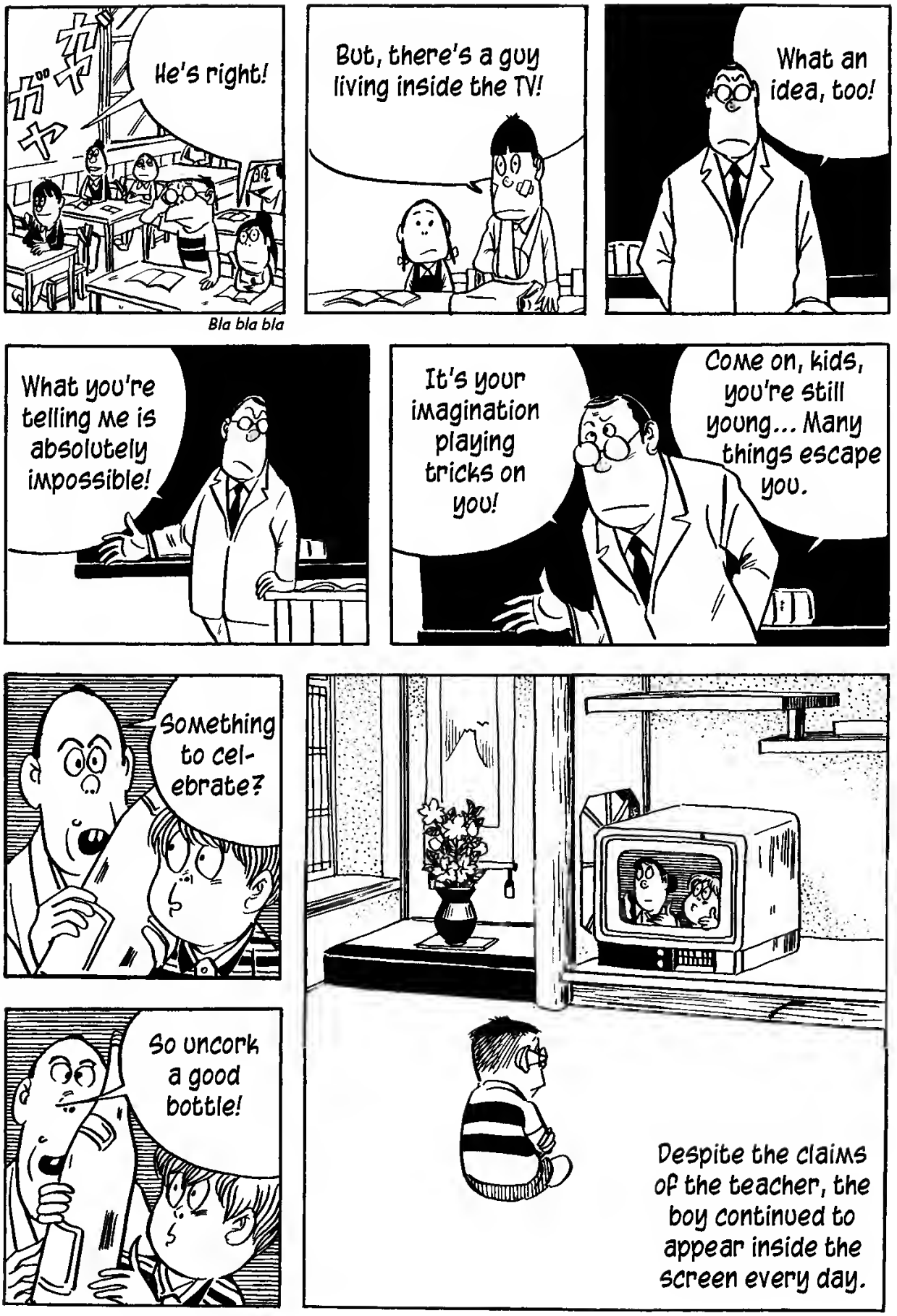


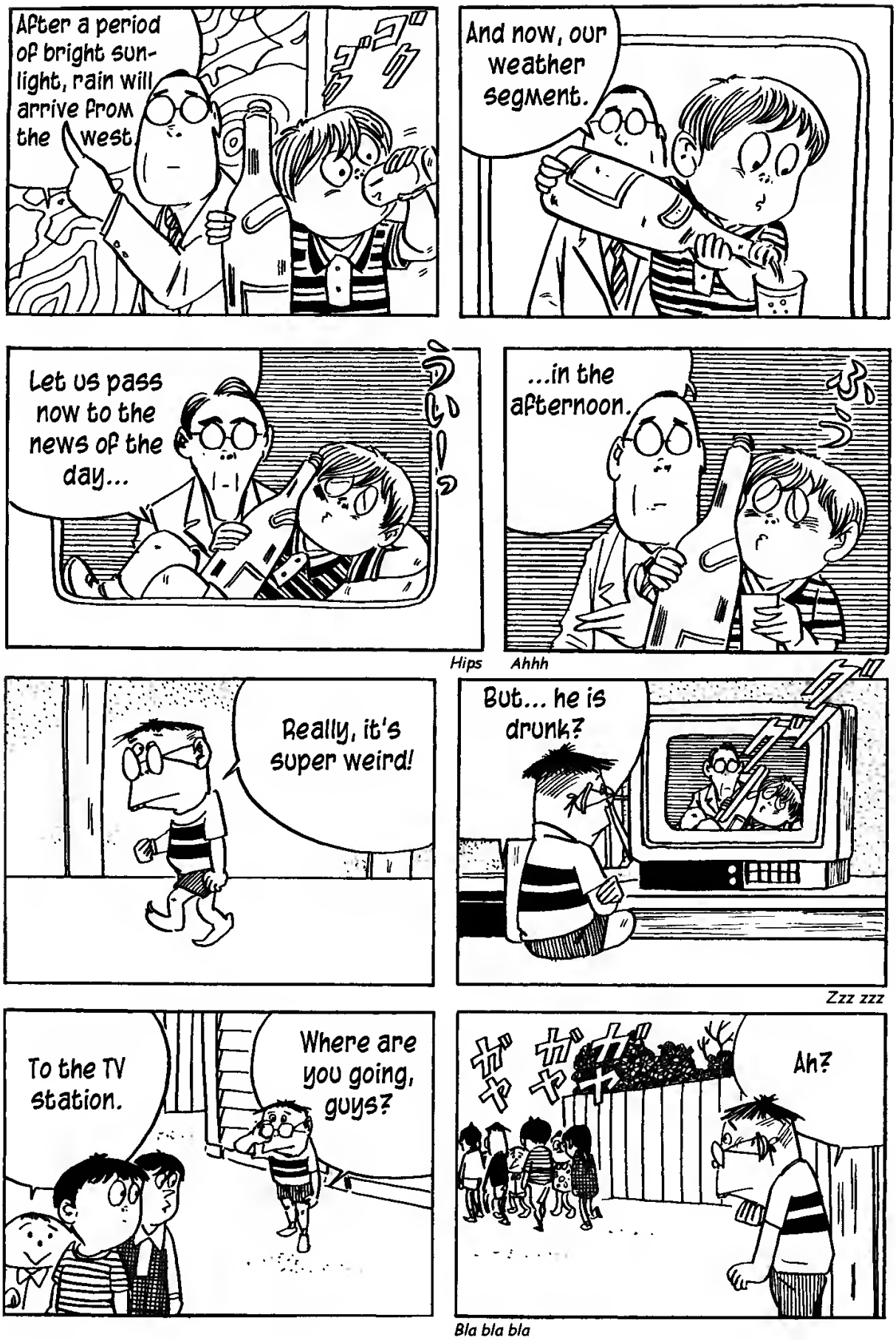


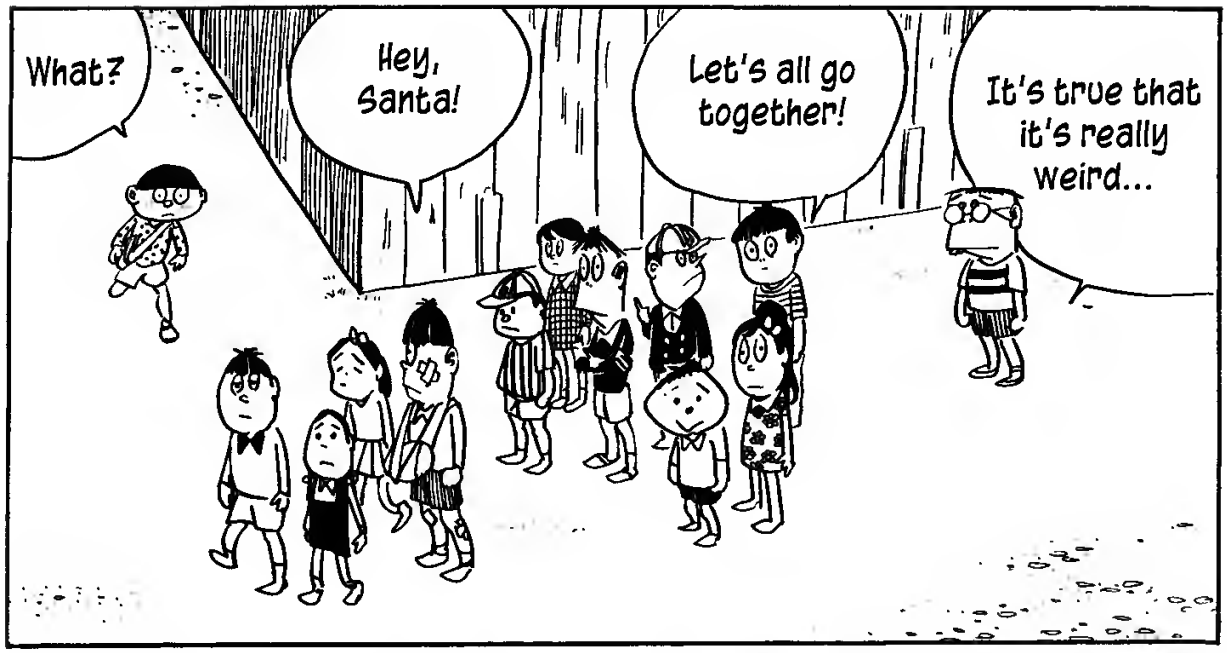


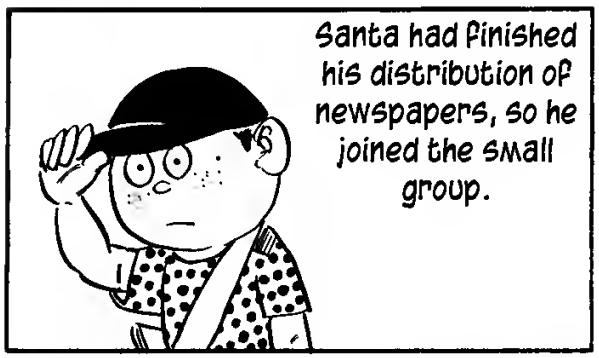
Bla bla *Bla bla*

So I wasn't dreaming!
It's him indeed...
He was eating the cakes from every advertisement!
But young Santa wasn't able to follow his friends' discussion, because he doesn't have a television set at home.
Apparently he lives in the TV, and...
Tap tap
Driiiiing
It's just that... I tried to enter inside the TV and it exploded...
Yes, sir...
Well, you're awfully messed up!
Shac

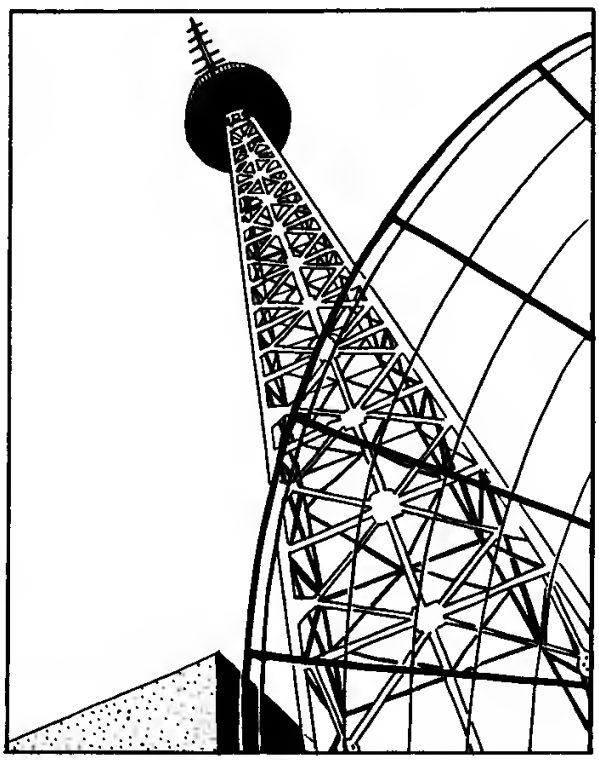

He's right!
ガヤ ガヤ
But, there's a guy living inside the TV!
What an idea, too!
Bla bla bla
What you're telling me is absolutely impossible!
It's your imagination playing tricks on you!
Come on, kids, you're still young... Many things escape you.
Something to celebrate?
So uncork a good bottle!
Despite the claims of the teacher, the boy continued to appear inside the screen every day.


After a period of bright sunlight, rain will arrive from the west.
And now, our weather segment.
Let us pass now to the news of the day...
...in the afternoon.
Hips
Ahhh
Really, it's super weird!
But... he is drunk?
Zzz zzz
To the TV station.
Where are you going, guys?
Ah?
Bla bla bla

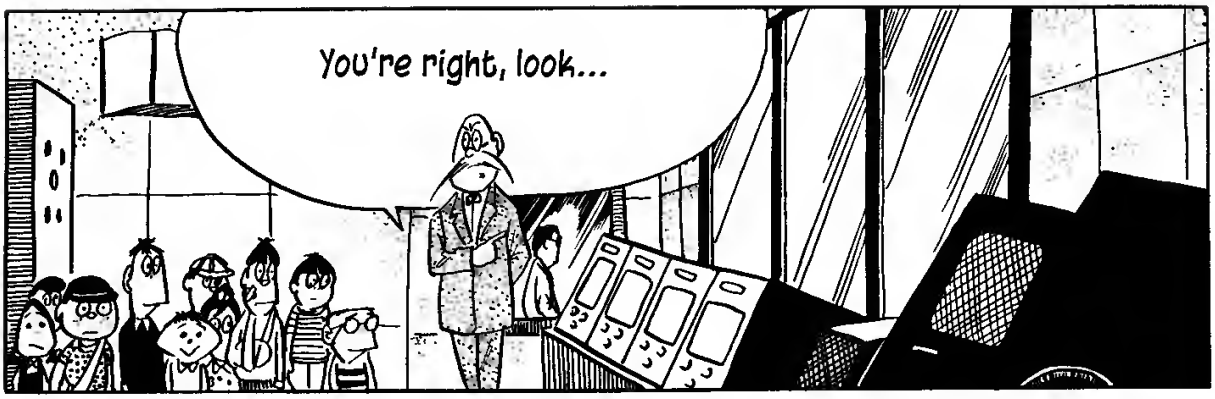


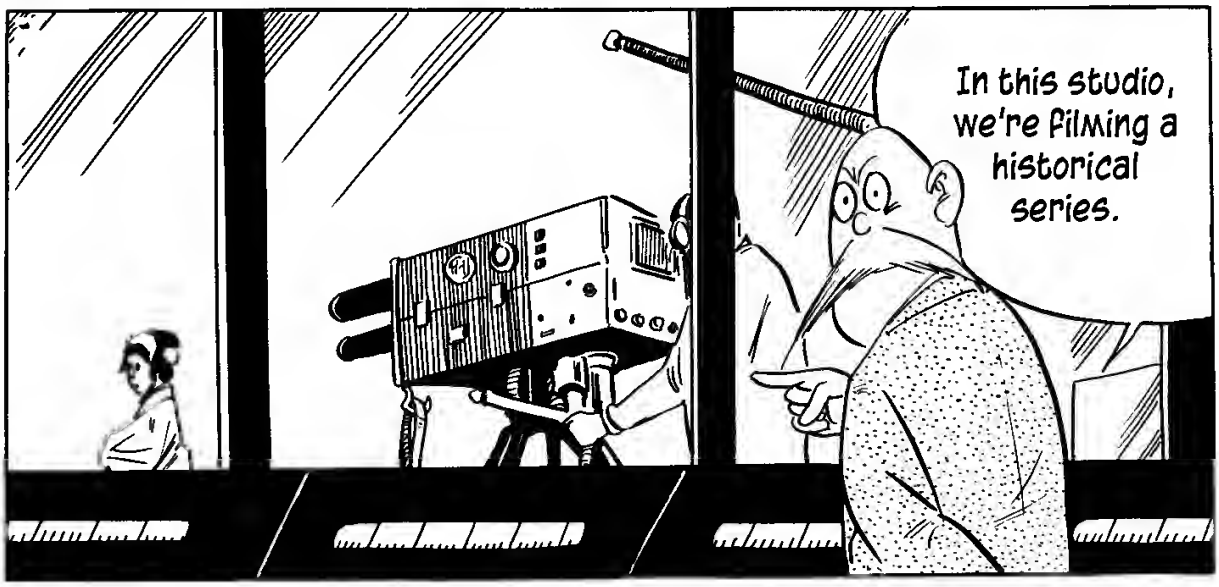


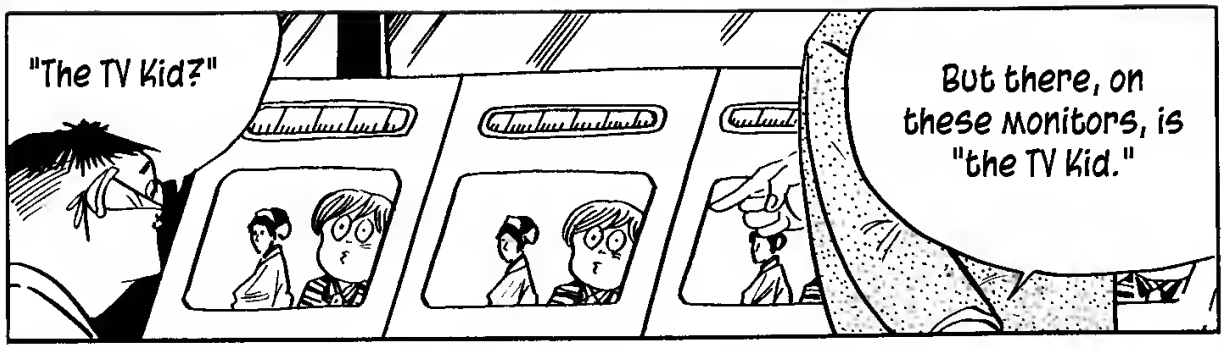
Ha ha ha ha

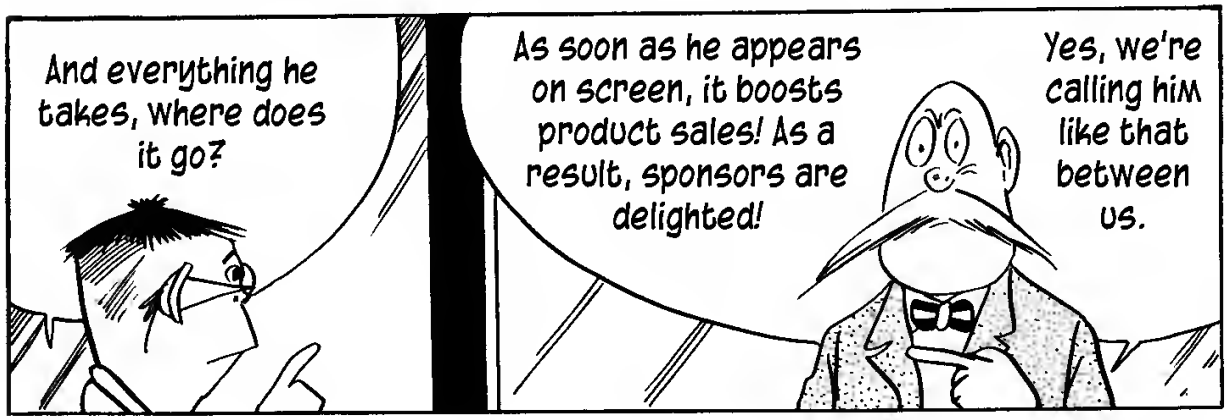


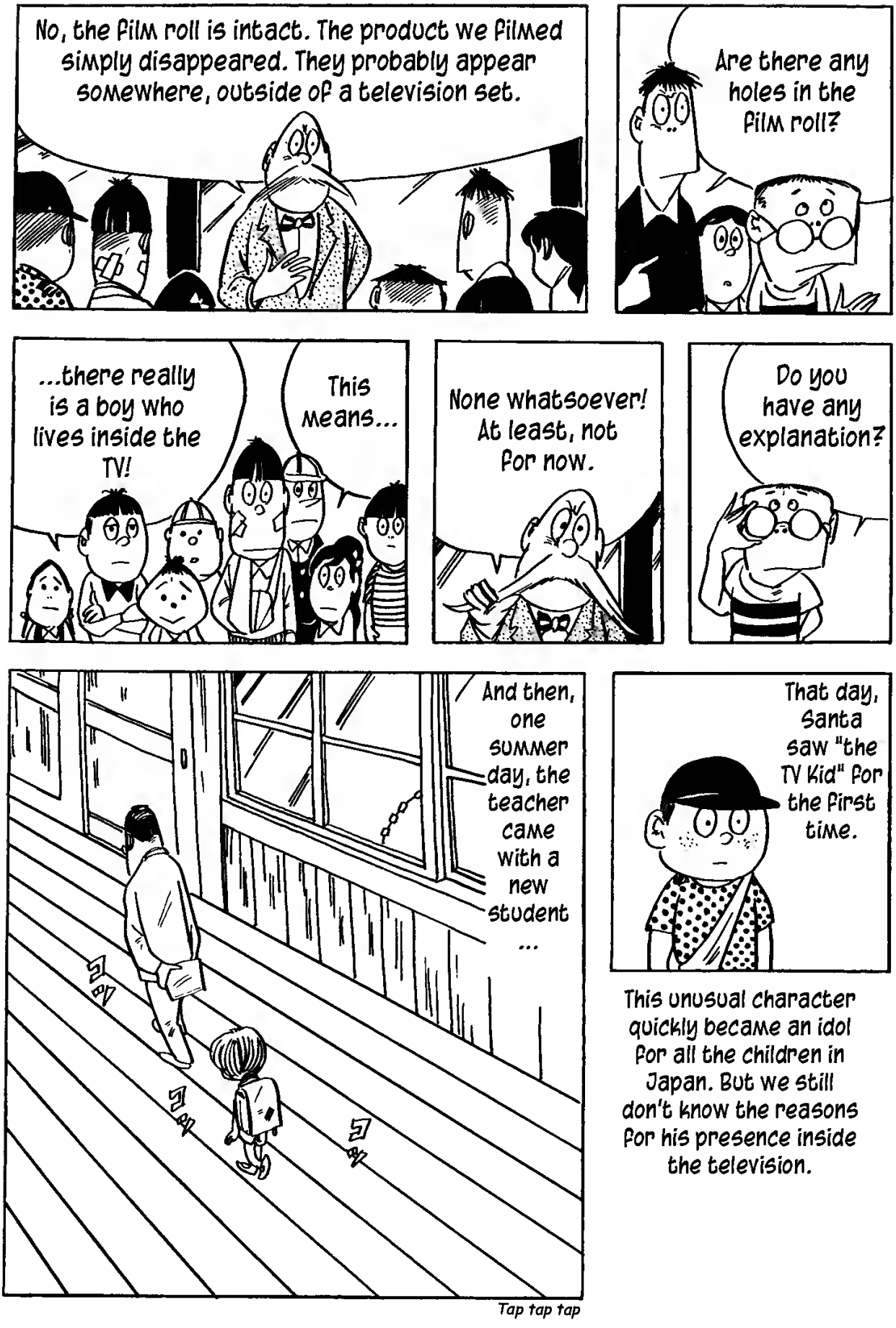
Director


You're right, look...


In this studio, we're filming a historical series.


"The TV kid?"
But there, on these monitors, is "the TV kid."

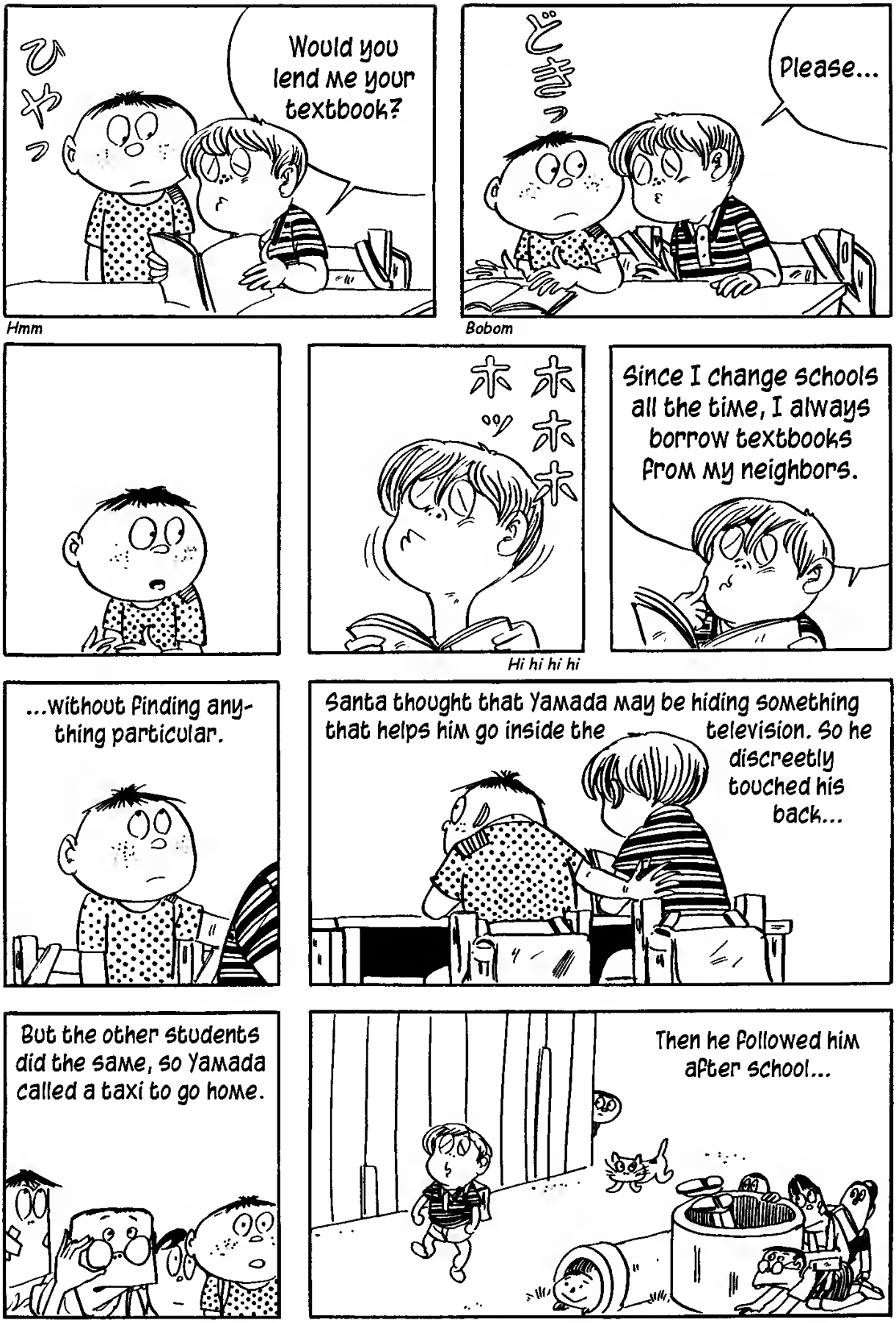

And everything he takes, where does it go?
As soon as he appears on screen, it boosts product sales! As a result, sponsors are delighted!
Yes, we're calling him like that between us.


No, the film roll is intact. The product we filmed simply disappeared. They probably appear somewhere, outside of a television set.
Are there any holes in the film roll?
...there really is a boy who lives inside the TV!
This means...
None whatsoever! At least, not for now.
Do you have any explanation?
And then, one summer day, the teacher came with a new student ...
Tap tap tap
That day, Santa saw "the TV Kid" for the first time.

This unusual character quickly became an idol for all the children in Japan. But we still don't know the reasons for his presence inside the television.

Nice to meet you
Your new friend: his name is Yamada and he's joining our class from today on.
Let me introduce you...
It's the TV Kid!!
Well really!!
?
Woaaah!!
Say, how do you manage to get inside the TV?
Let me touch you!
But... I...
Please, an autograph!

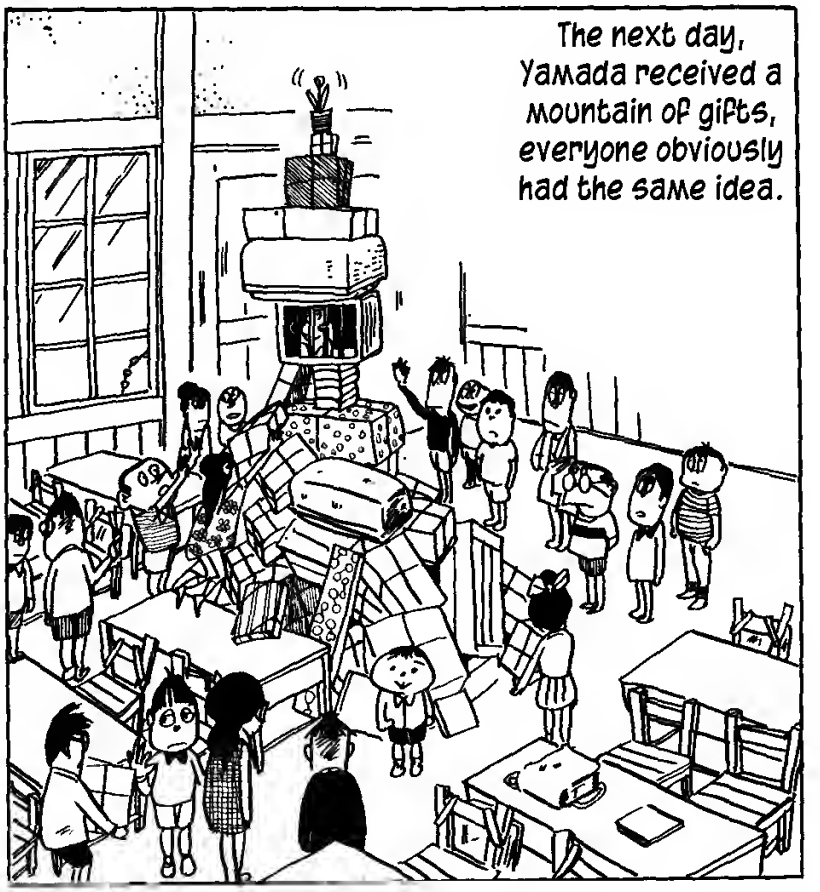
You really look a lot like him...
Well, it's just a resemblance!
But ah! I'M just a normal boy!
Don't hide it! We know who you are!!
Yeah, right! You're the TV Kid!
Yamada, sit down there, next to Santa.
Enough! To your seats at once!!
That face and those round eyes... That's him, that's for sure!
Yes, sir.


ひゃっ
Would you lend me your textbook?
どきっ
Please...
Hmm
Bobom
Since I change schools all the time, I always borrow textbooks from my neighbors.
Hi hi hi hi
...without finding anything particular.
Santa thought that Yamada may be hiding something that helps him go inside the television. So he discreetly touched his back...
But the other students did the same, so Yamada called a taxi to go home.
Then he followed him after school...

...that way, he'll tell me how he gets inside the TV!

Tomorrow, I'll give him an eraser...

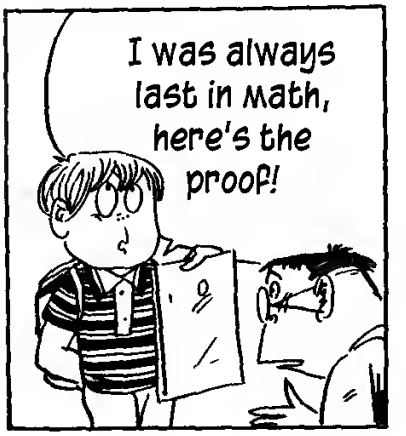
Why are you doing all that?

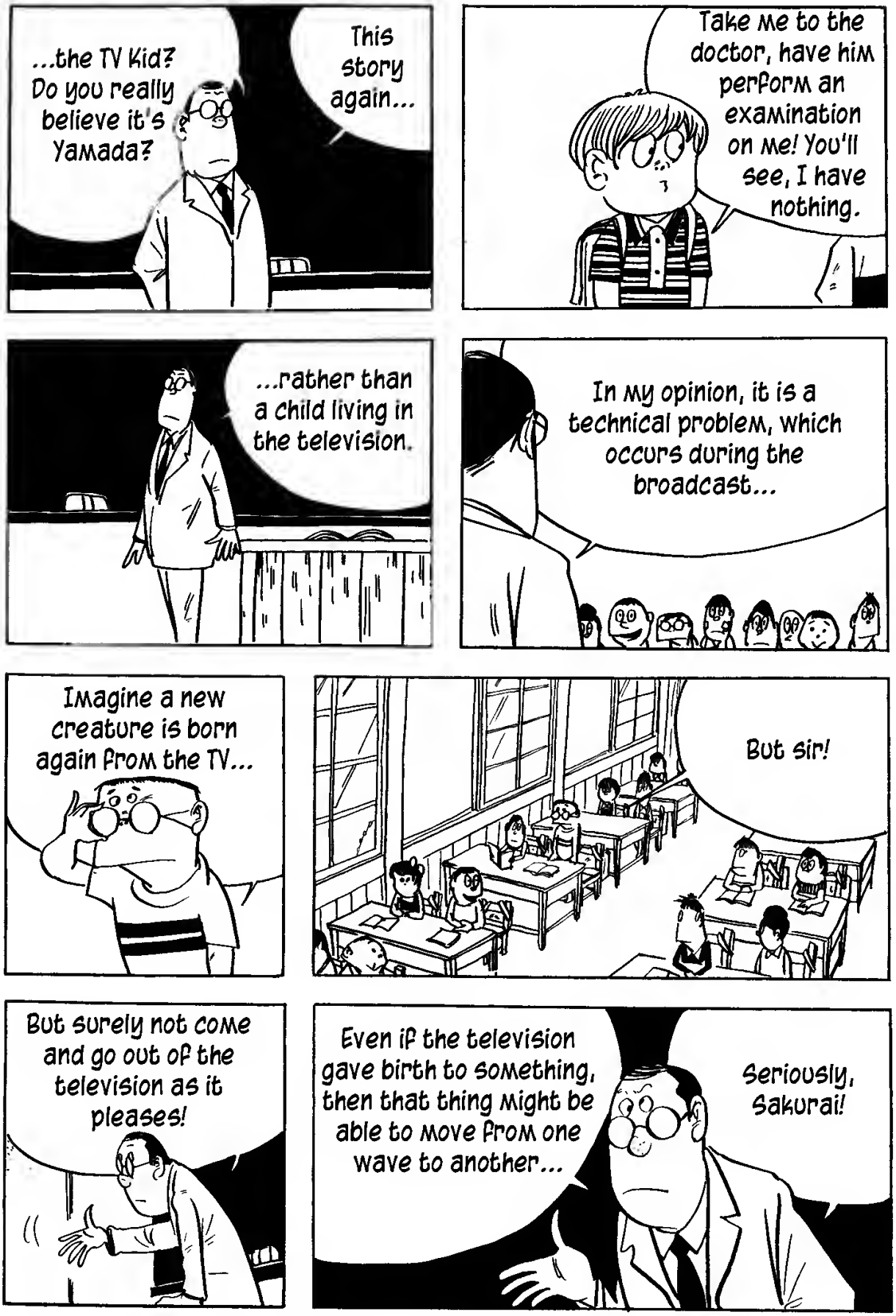

The next day, Yamada received a mountain of gifts, everyone obviously had the same idea.

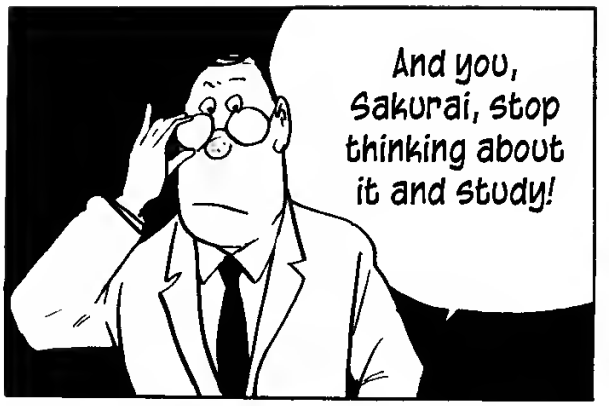
You're mistaken about me. I have nothing special.

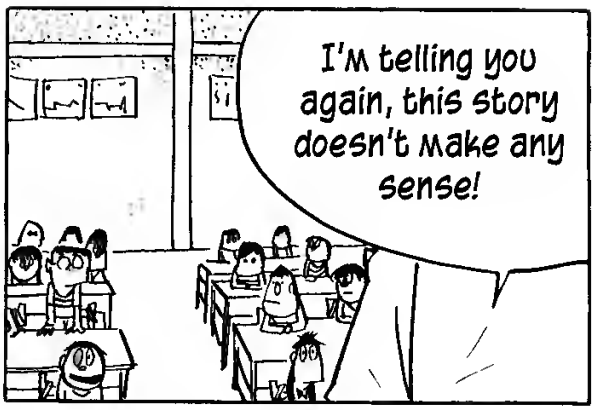
Do you think my body can do weird stuff?

He's telling the truth.


I was always last in math, here's the proof!

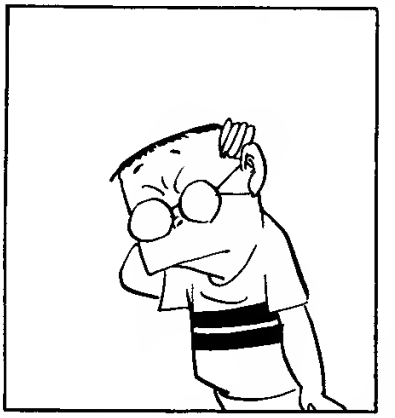

This story again...
...the TV kid? Do you really believe it's Yamada?
Take me to the doctor, have him perform an examination on me! You'll see, I have nothing.
...rather than a child living in the television.
In my opinion, it is a technical problem, which occurs during the broadcast...
Imagine a new creature is born again from the TV...
But sir!
But surely not come and go out of the television as it pleases!
Even if the television gave birth to something, then that thing might be able to move from one wave to another...
Seriously, Sakurai!

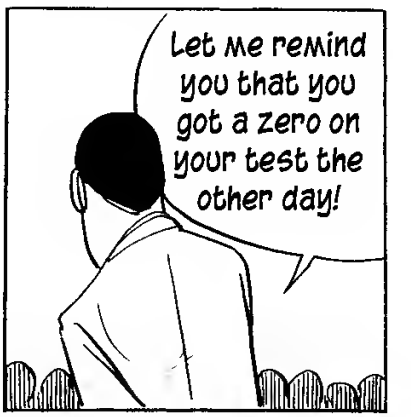

And you, Sakurai, stop thinking about it and study!

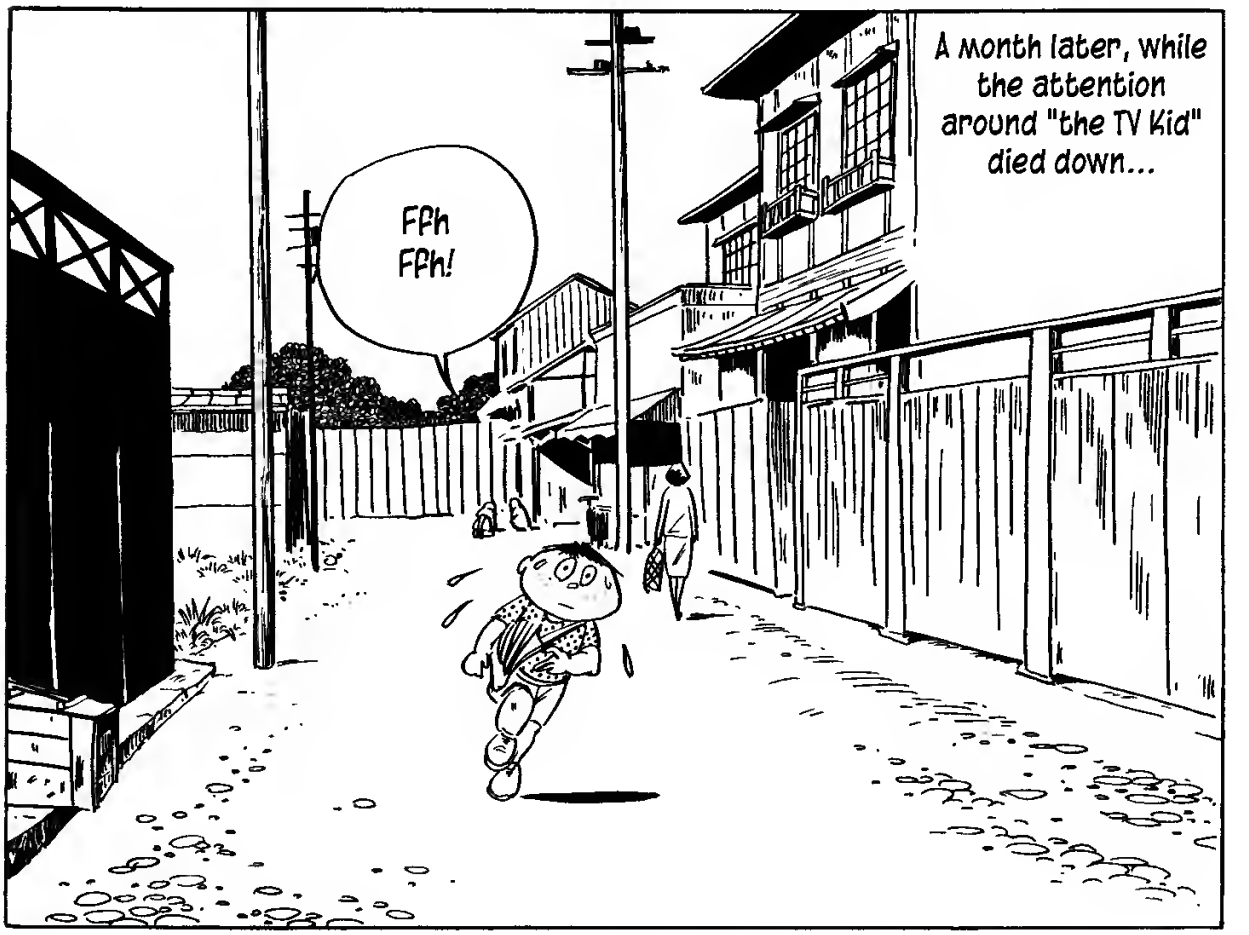

I'm telling you again, this story doesn't make any sense!

ハハハ

Ha ha ha ha



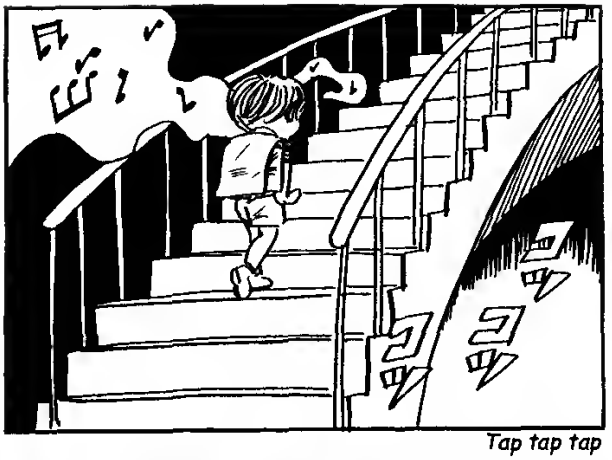

Let me remind you that you got a zero on your test the other day!

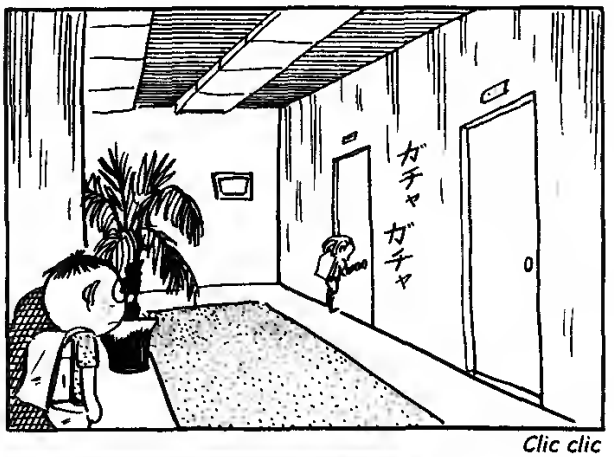

A month later, while the attention around "the TV kid" died down...
Ffh Ffh!

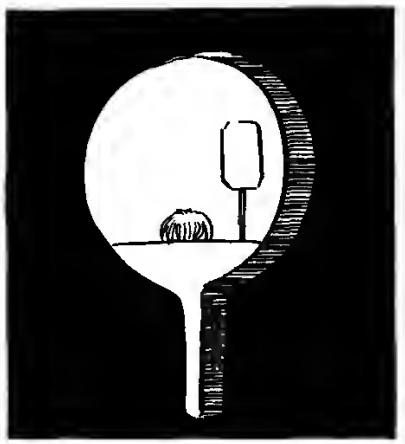
Yes, I'm doing this to help my mom. She's ill and my dad is dead, so...
You deliver newspapers to people?
Hello, Santa!
Hey!
It's a new medicine that cures all diseases.
What is it?
I see... Here, I have something for you.
In that case, take this too.
No.
Of course! Say, you have a TV at home?
I... I can keep it?
But... It's for me?
It's a transistor TV. It's new, it just came out!
Oh! It's really small!

?
See you here tomorrow, okay?
Yes!
Wow! A toy that looks like a TV!
Look at this!
Ah, big brother!
...this incredible innovation!
Look, you can see the pictures!
It's a real TV!
It's not a toy!
Toc
The next day...
What, no way! Running helps me work out!
That would be nice for you, if you had a bike like that...
A special bike for newspaper delivery!

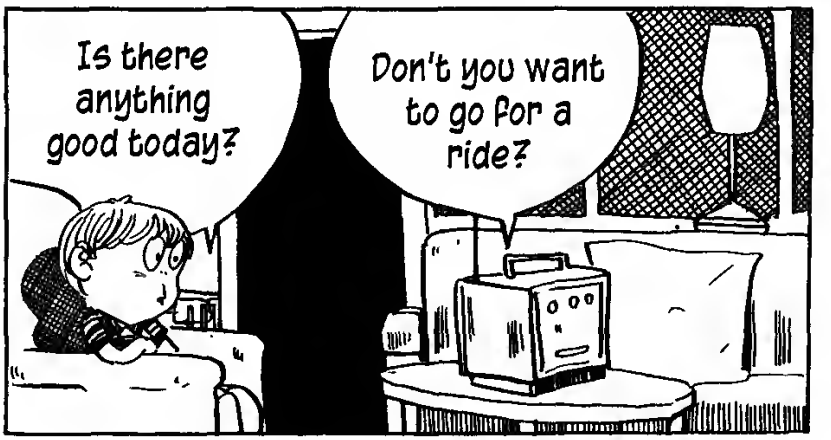
But, the ad said that it would be available in... So this means, Yamada...
...really is the "TV Kid?!"
Hello, I brought you a new bike. It has just been put on sale.
?
In order to be sure of it, Santa decided to follow his friend after school.

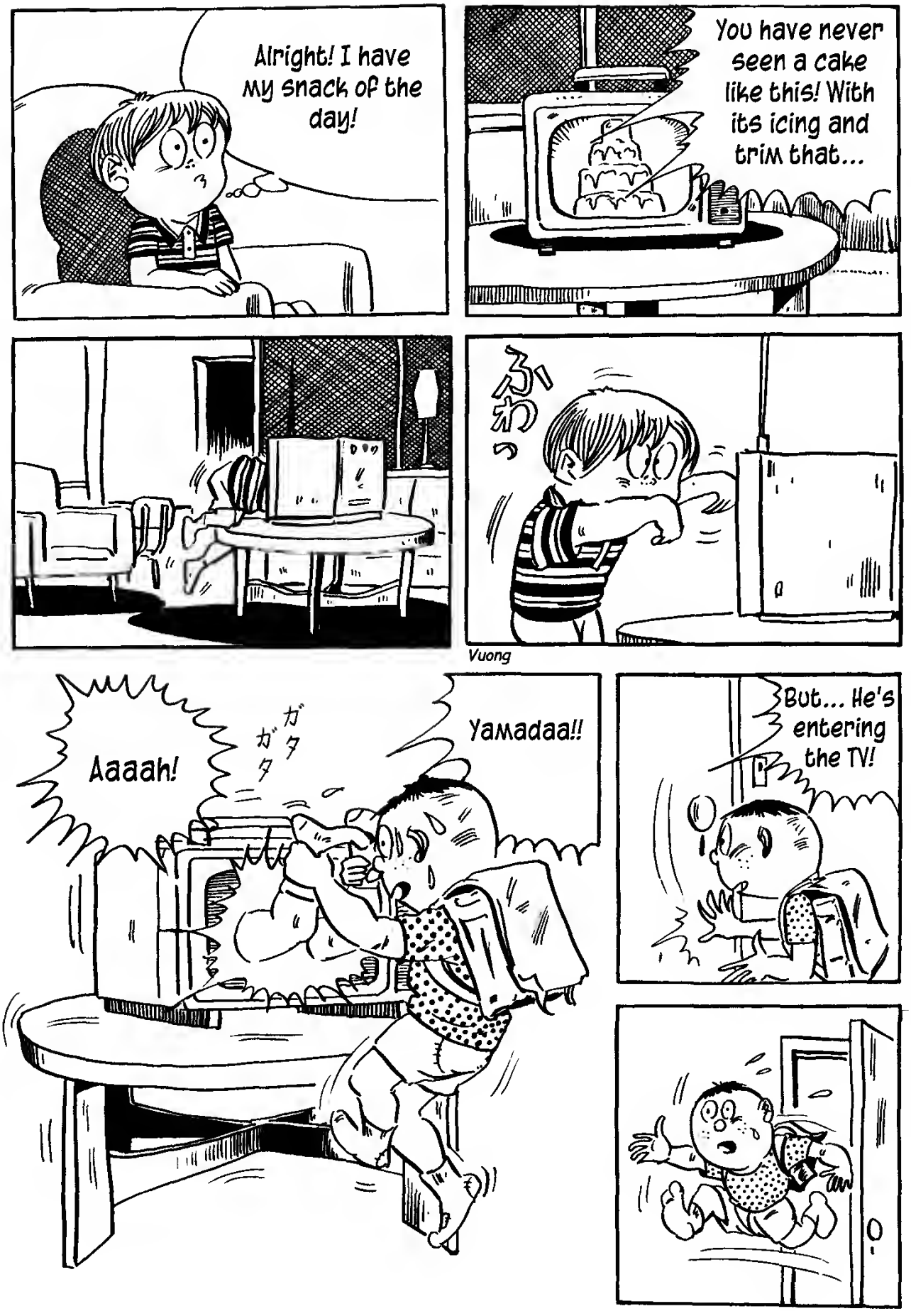


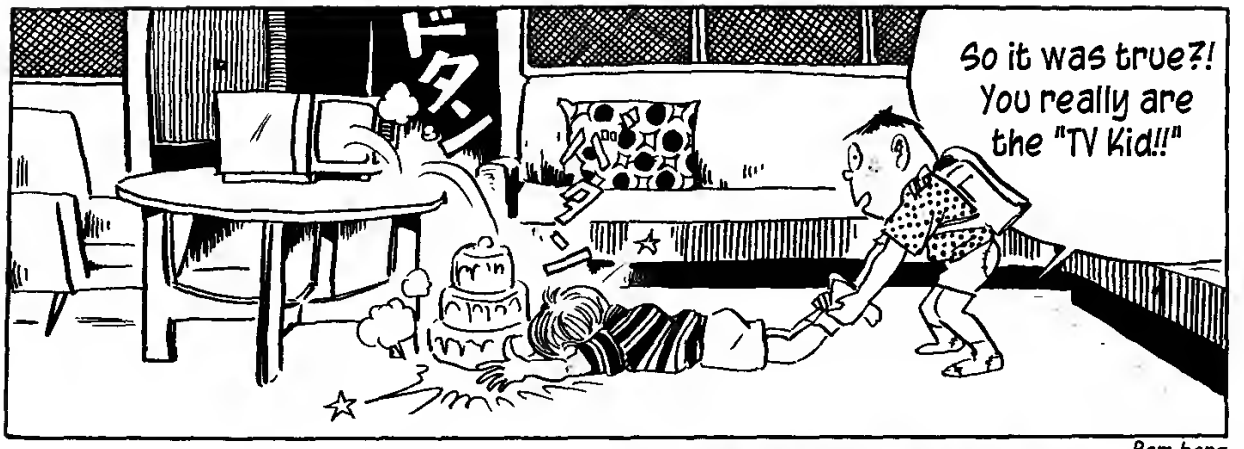




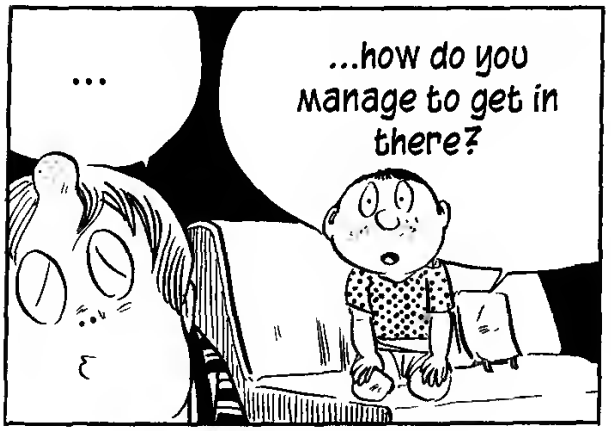
He spied on him through the keyhole...

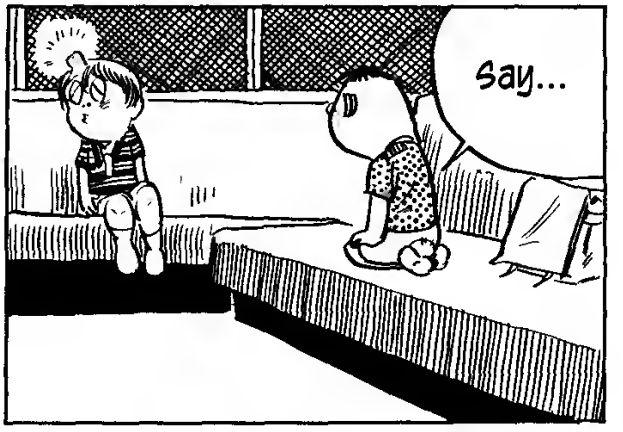



Alright! I have my snack of the day!
You have never seen a cake like this! With its icing and trim that...
ふわっ
Vuong
Aaaah!
ガタガタ
Yamadaa!!
But... He's entering the TV!


ドタン
So it was true?! You really are the "TV Kid!!"

Bom bong

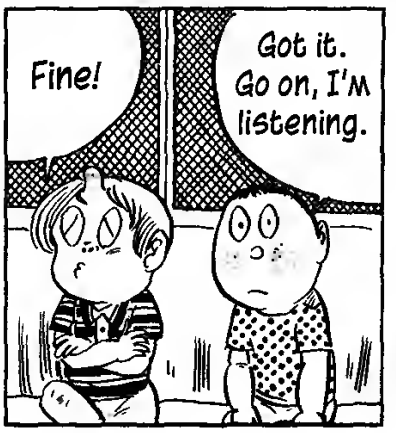

...
...how do you manage to get in there?


Say...

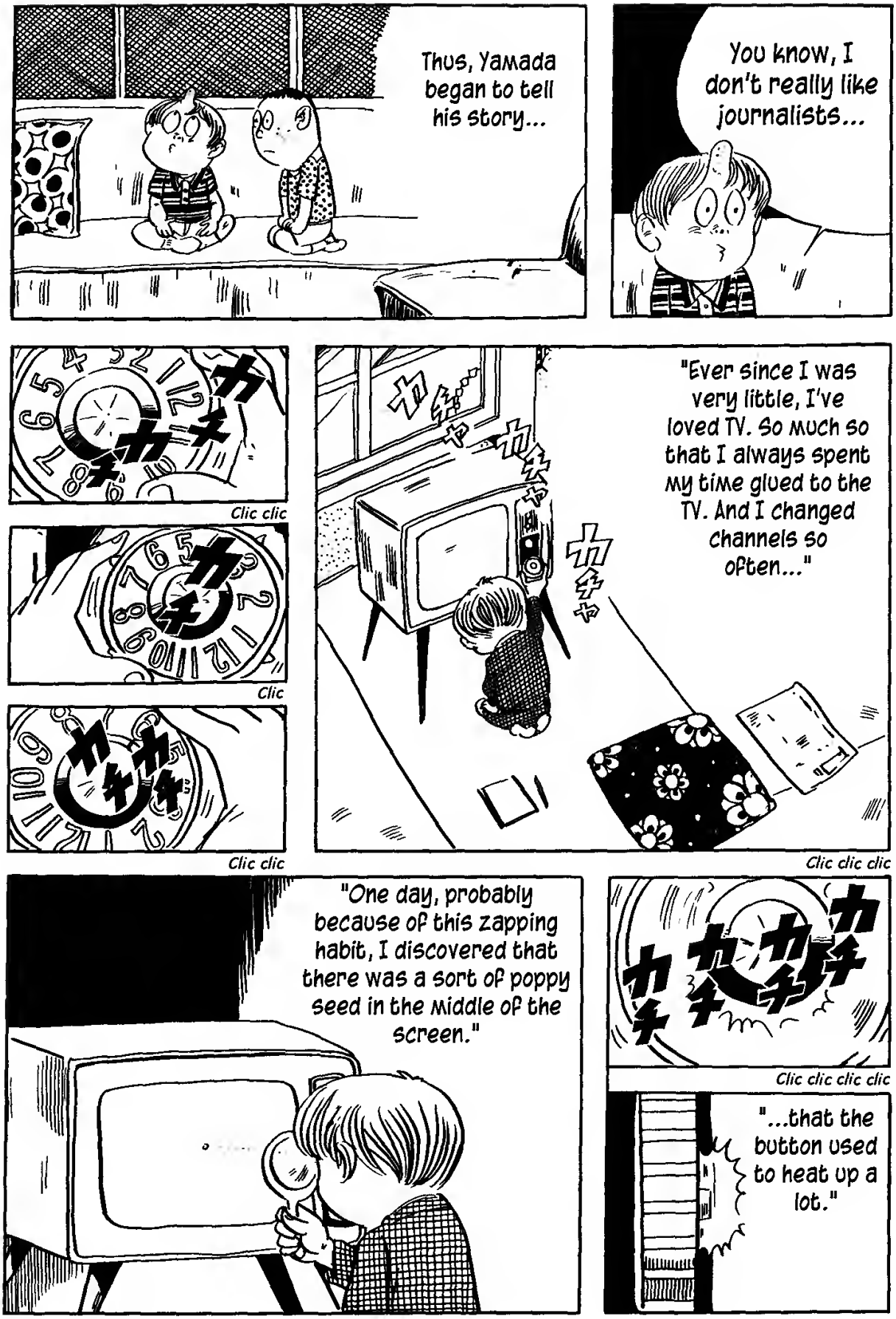
Ok, ok, fine.
I'd like to go there too, with my two brothers...

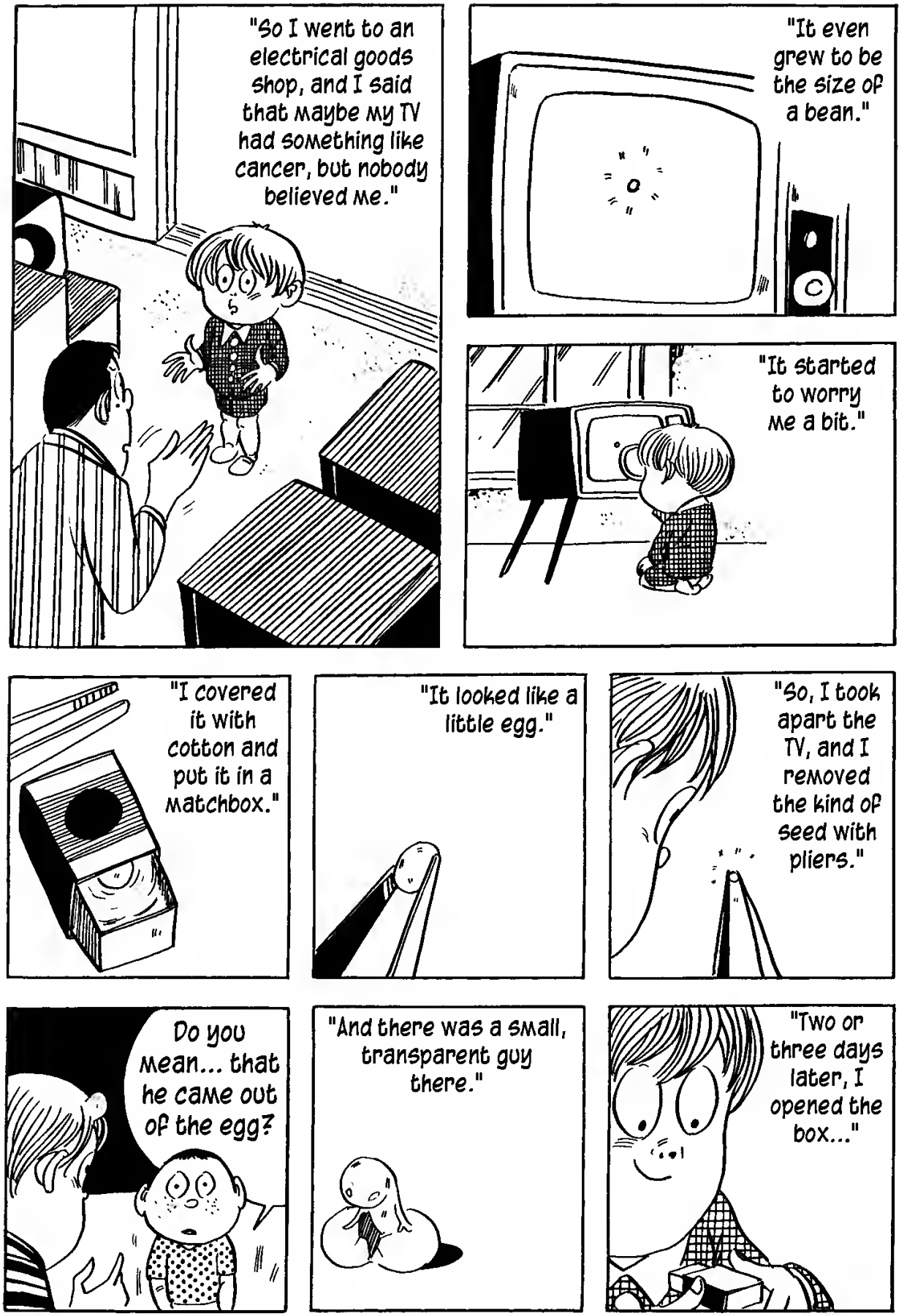
.....
Come on, tell me, please!

One last thing: Promise me to not tell it to anyone!

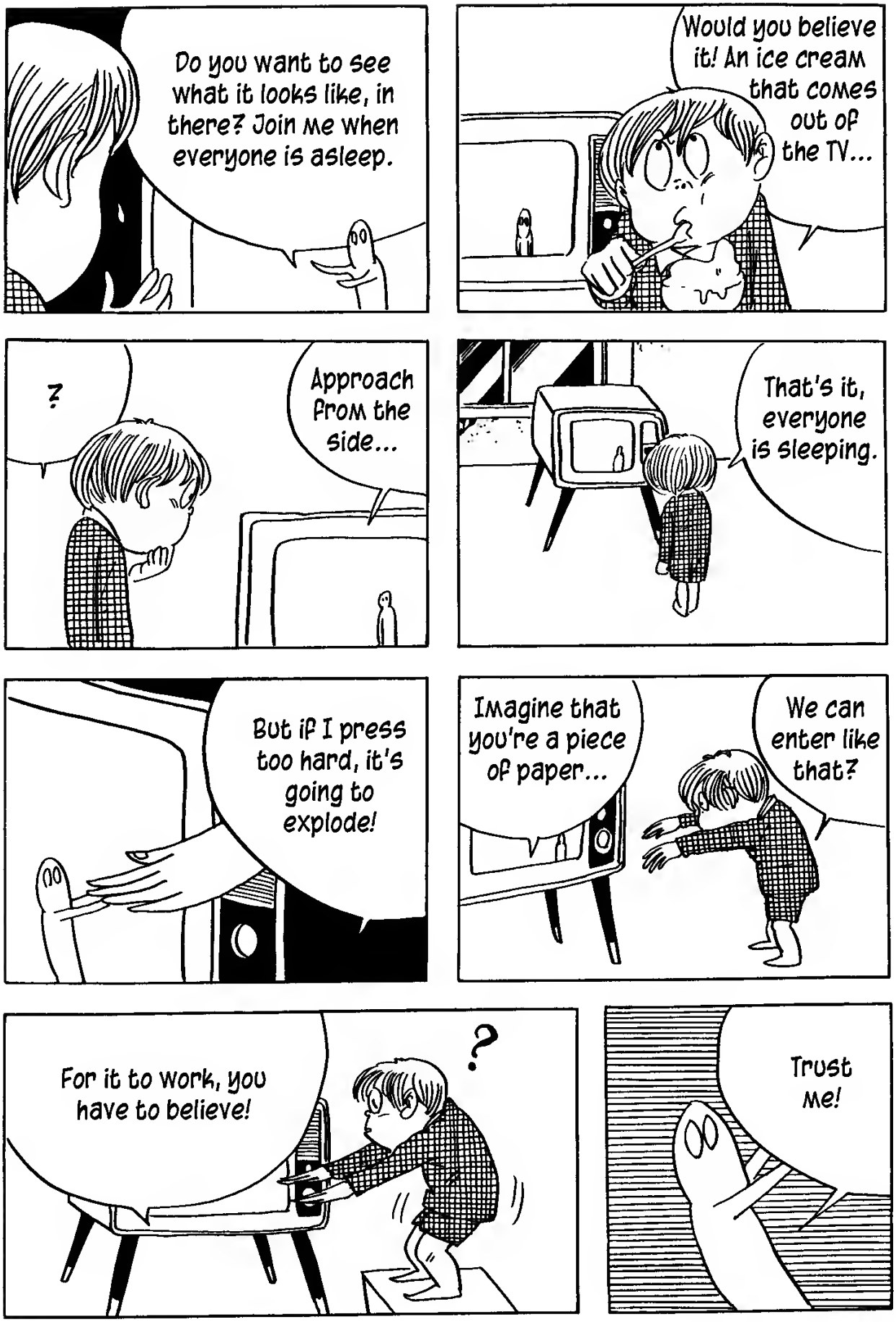

Fine!
Got it. Go on, I'm listening.

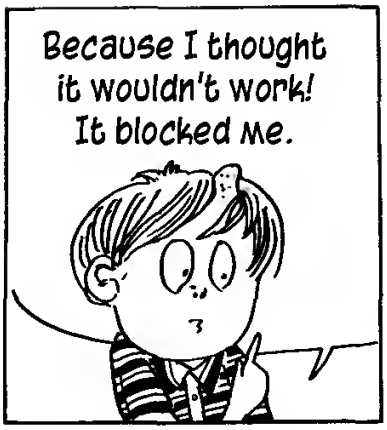
But beware! Just because I tell you how I do it, doesn't mean it'll work for you!

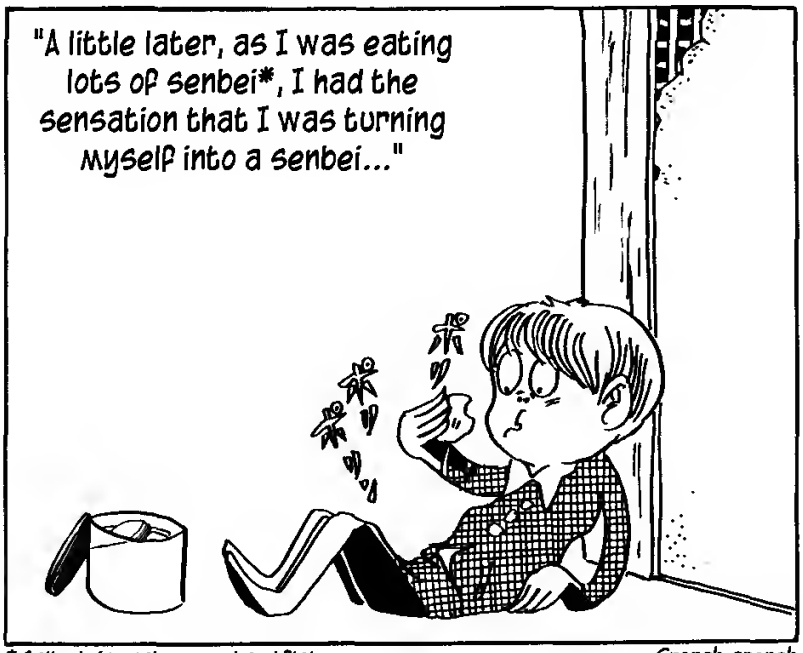

Thus, Yamada began to tell his story...
You know, I don't really like journalists...
Clic clic
Clic
Clic clic
"Ever since I was very little, I've loved TV. So much so that I always spent my time glued to the TV. And I changed channels so often..."
Clic clic clic
"One day, probably because of this zapping habit, I discovered that there was a sort of poppy seed in the middle of the screen."
Clic clic clic clic
"...that the button used to heat up a lot."


"So I went to an electrical goods shop, and I said that maybe my TV had something like cancer, but nobody believed me."
"It even grew to be the size of a bean."
"It started to worry me a bit."
"I covered it with cotton and put it in a matchbox."
"It looked like a little egg."
"So, I took apart the TV, and I removed the kind of seed with pliers."
Do you mean... that he came out of the egg?
"And there was a small, transparent guy there."
"Two or three days later, I opened the box..."

Well, I put him back where he came from. So that he'd grow up, you see!
What for?
I slipped him into the cathode-ray tube.
And then? What did you do with the guy?
"And one day ..."
How are you?
Hello!
"As soon as he was in the tube, he began to move. He was like a fish in water! And since then, whenever I turn on the TV, he says to me..."
I was dying to have a taste of it.
Mmm, it must be good...
A wonder from the brand "Moon!"
...a new ice cream that will delight your palate!
But... It is real?!
What?!
Eat quickly before it melts!
"At that moment, the little guy in the TV told me..."

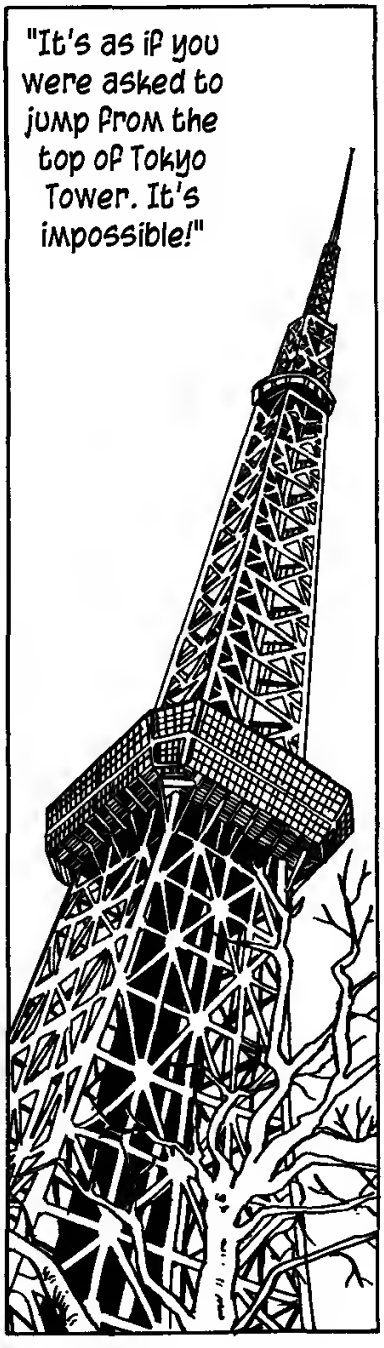

Do you want to see what it looks like, in there? Join me when everyone is asleep.
Would you believe it! An ice cream that comes out of the TV...
?
Approach from the side...
That's it, everyone is sleeping.
But if I press too hard, it's going to explode!
Imagine that you're a piece of paper...
We can enter like that?
For it to work, you have to believe!
?
Trust me!

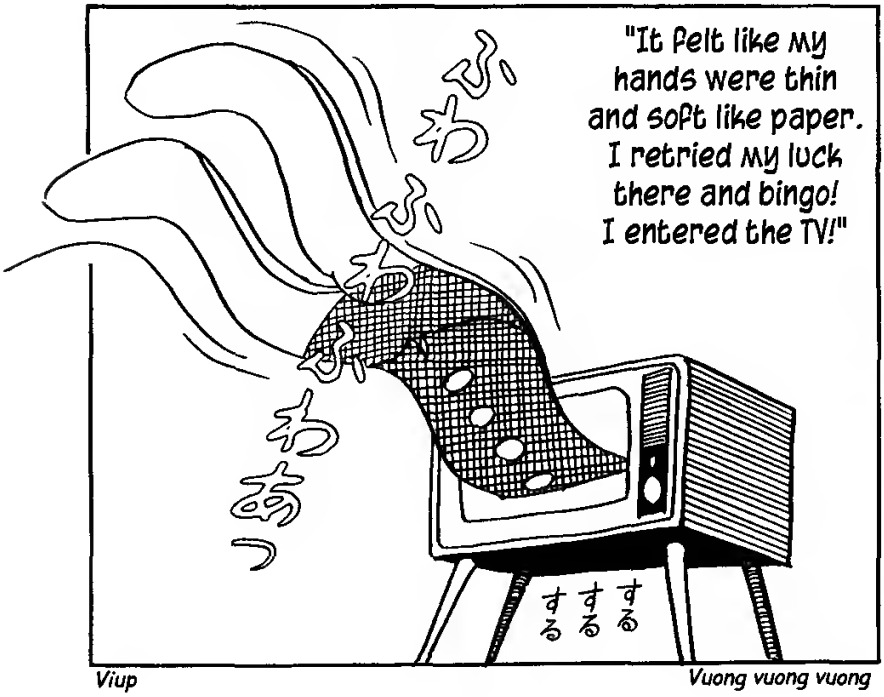




* Salted rice cake, round and flat.

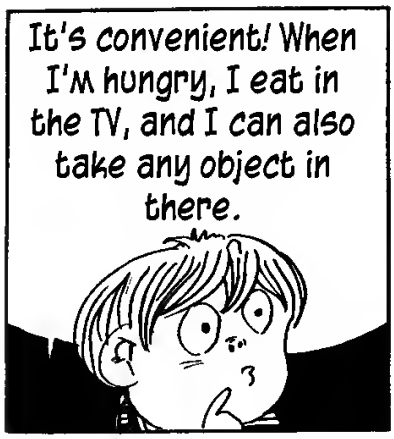
Cronch cronch

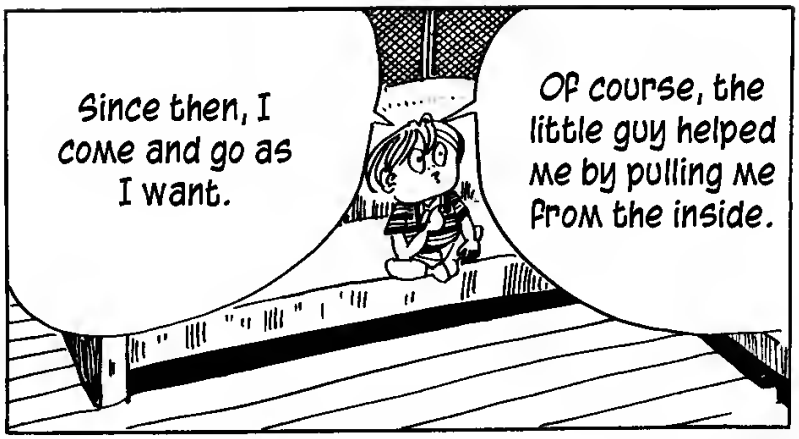


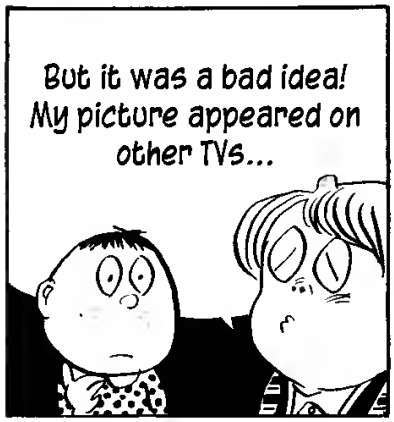


Viup

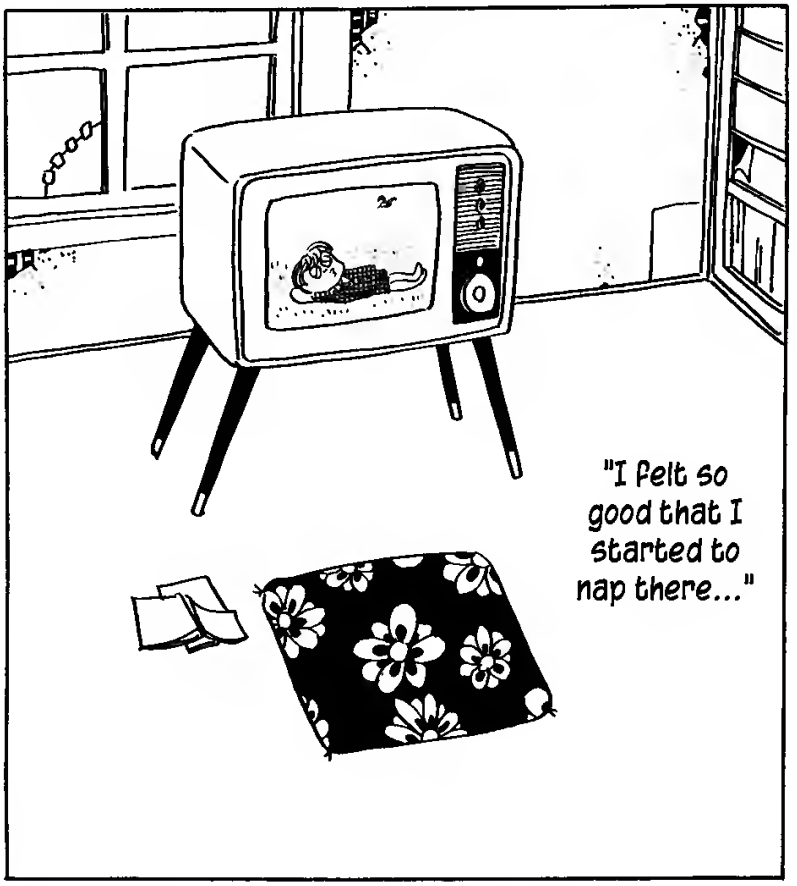
Vuong vuong vuong

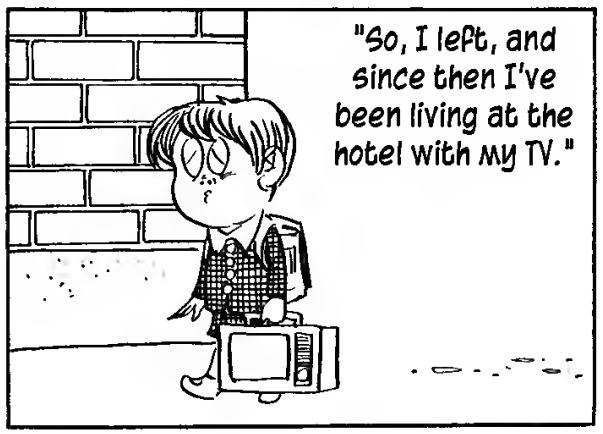

It's convenient! When I'm hungry, I eat in the TV, and I can also take any object in there.

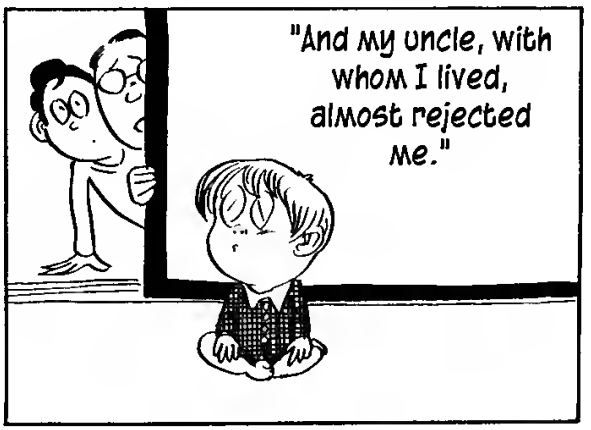

Since then, I come and go as I want.
Of course, the little guy helped me by pulling me from the inside.

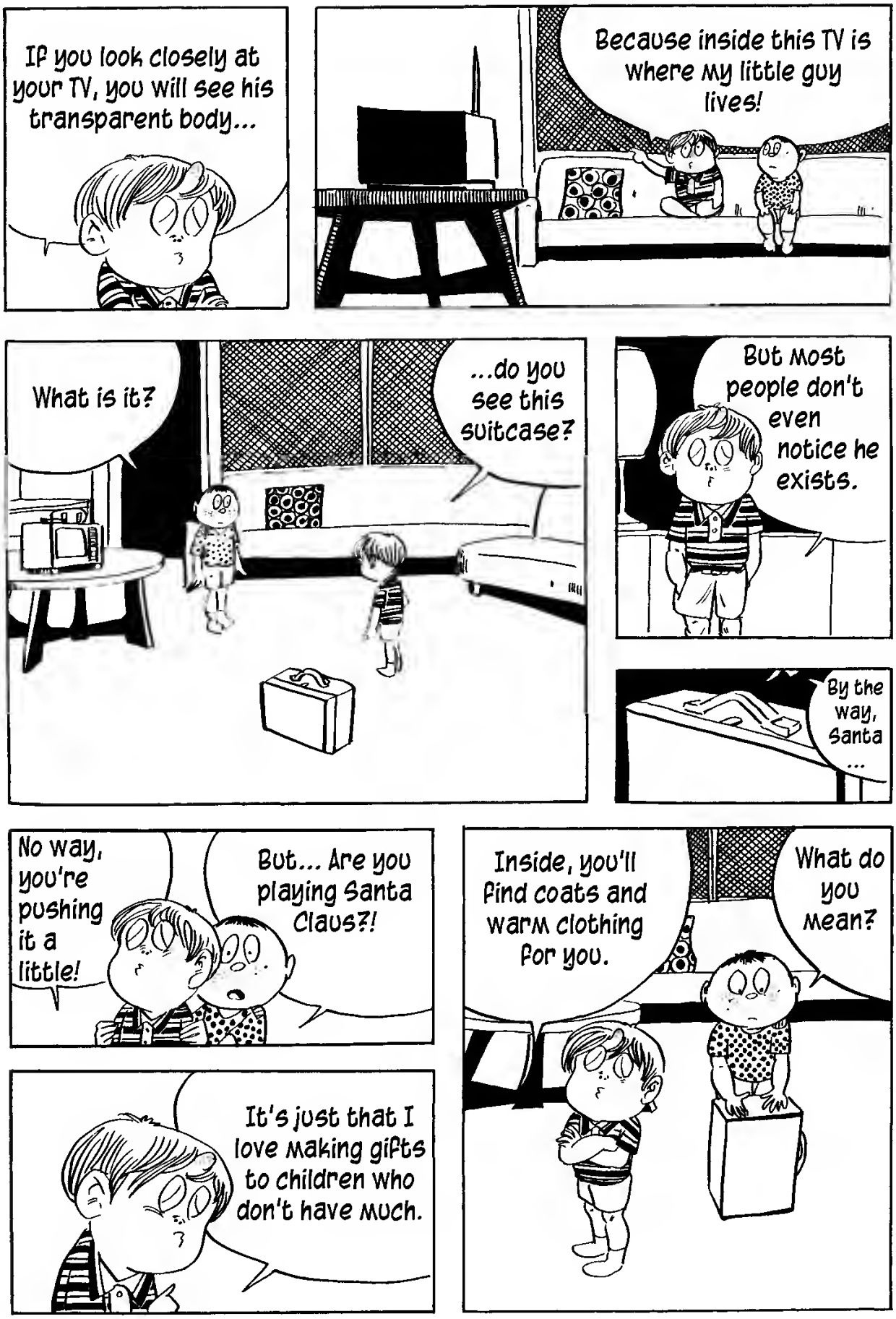

But it was a bad idea! My picture appeared on other TVs...

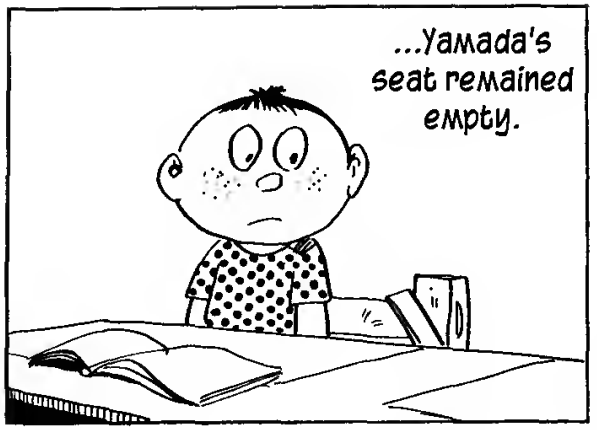
"My neighbors looked at me strangely..."

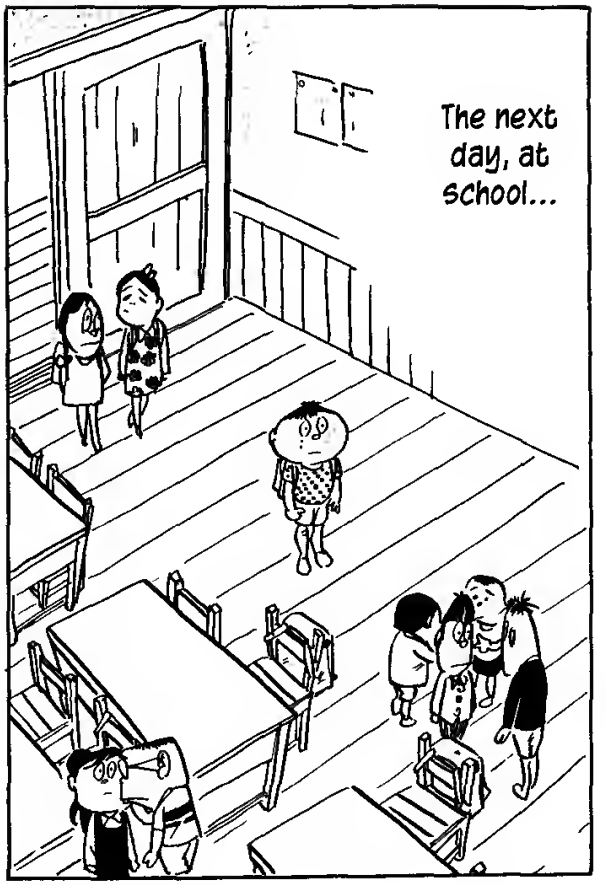

"I felt so good that I started to nap there..."

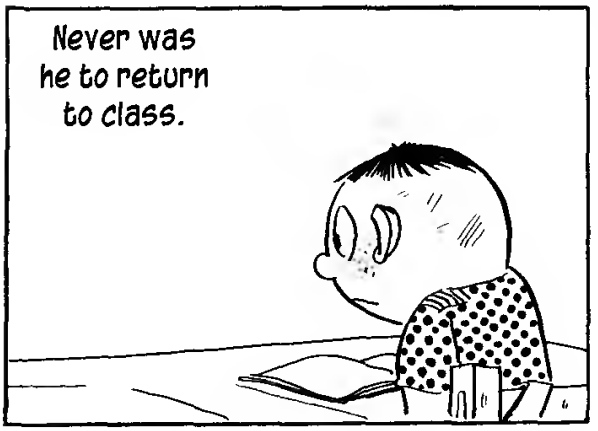

"So, I left, and since then I've been living at the hotel with my TV."


"And my uncle, with whom I lived, almost rejected me."


If you look closely at your TV, you will see his transparent body...
Because inside this TV is where my little guy lives!
What is it?
...do you see this suitcase?
But most people don't even notice he exists.
By the way, Santa ...
No way, you're pushing it a little!
But... Are you playing Santa Claus?!
Inside, you'll find coats and warm clothing for you.
What do you mean?
It's just that I love making gifts to children who don't have much.

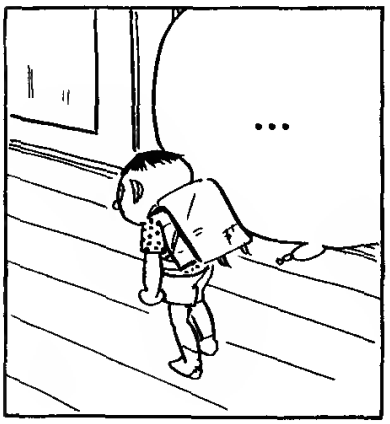

...Yamada's seat remained empty.


The next day, at school...


Never was he to return to class.

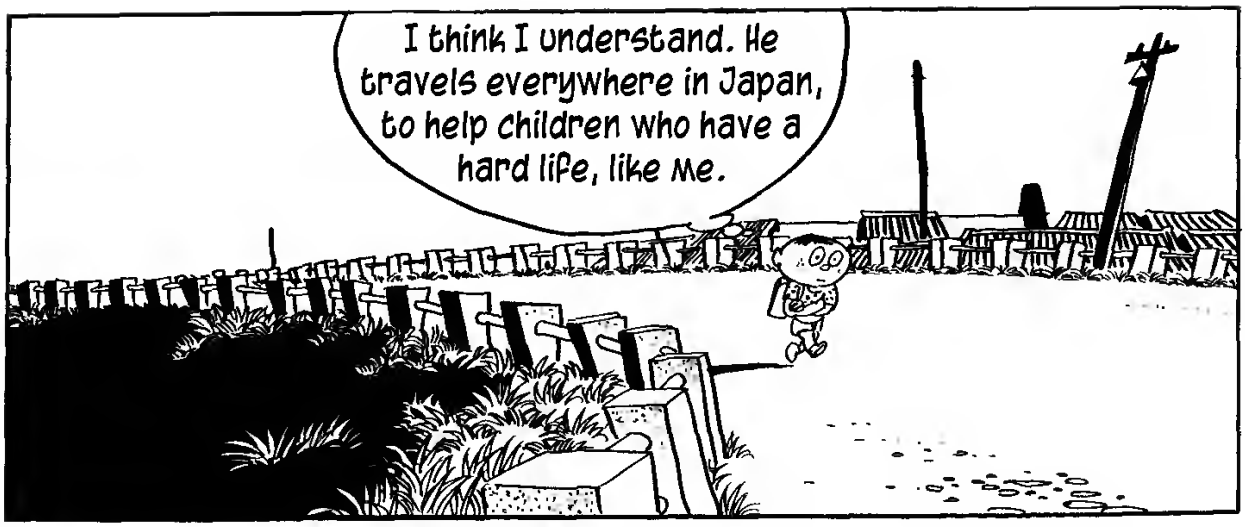
...Santa found a letter where it was written:

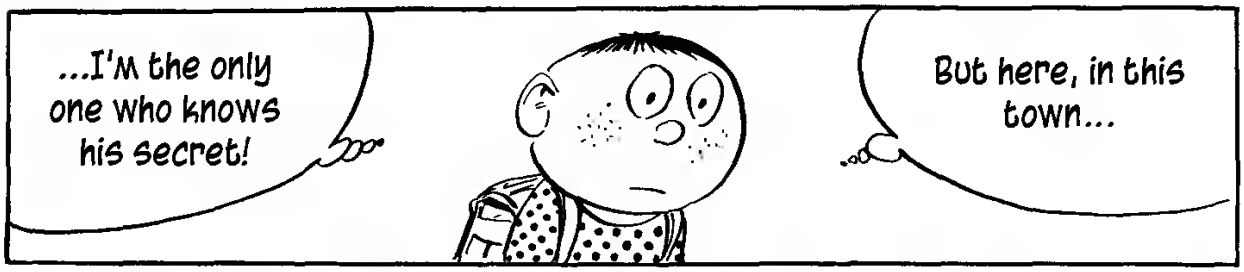
When opening Yamada's desk...

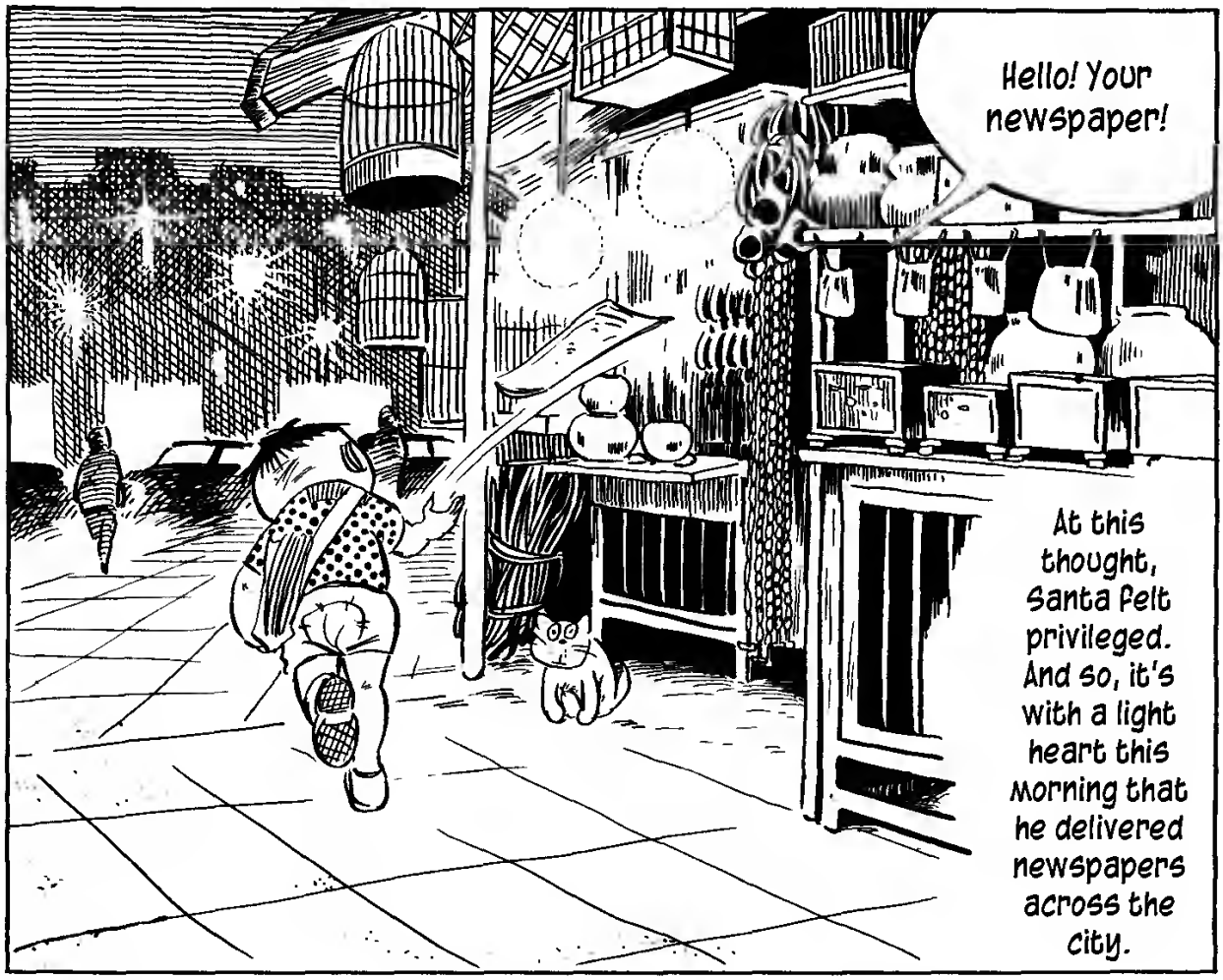

...

So, he's really gone?

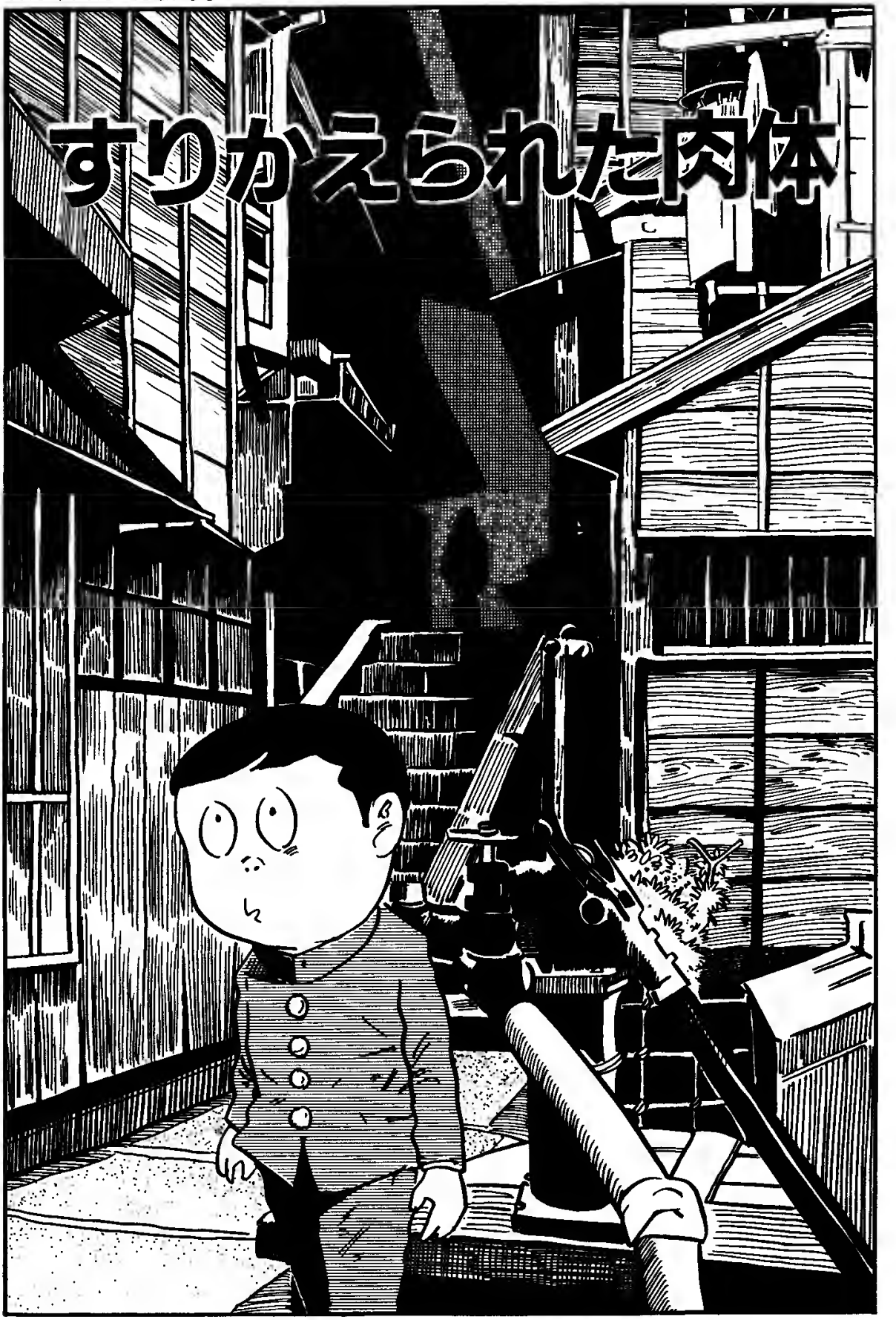
Meet you on TV! Courage, Santa!

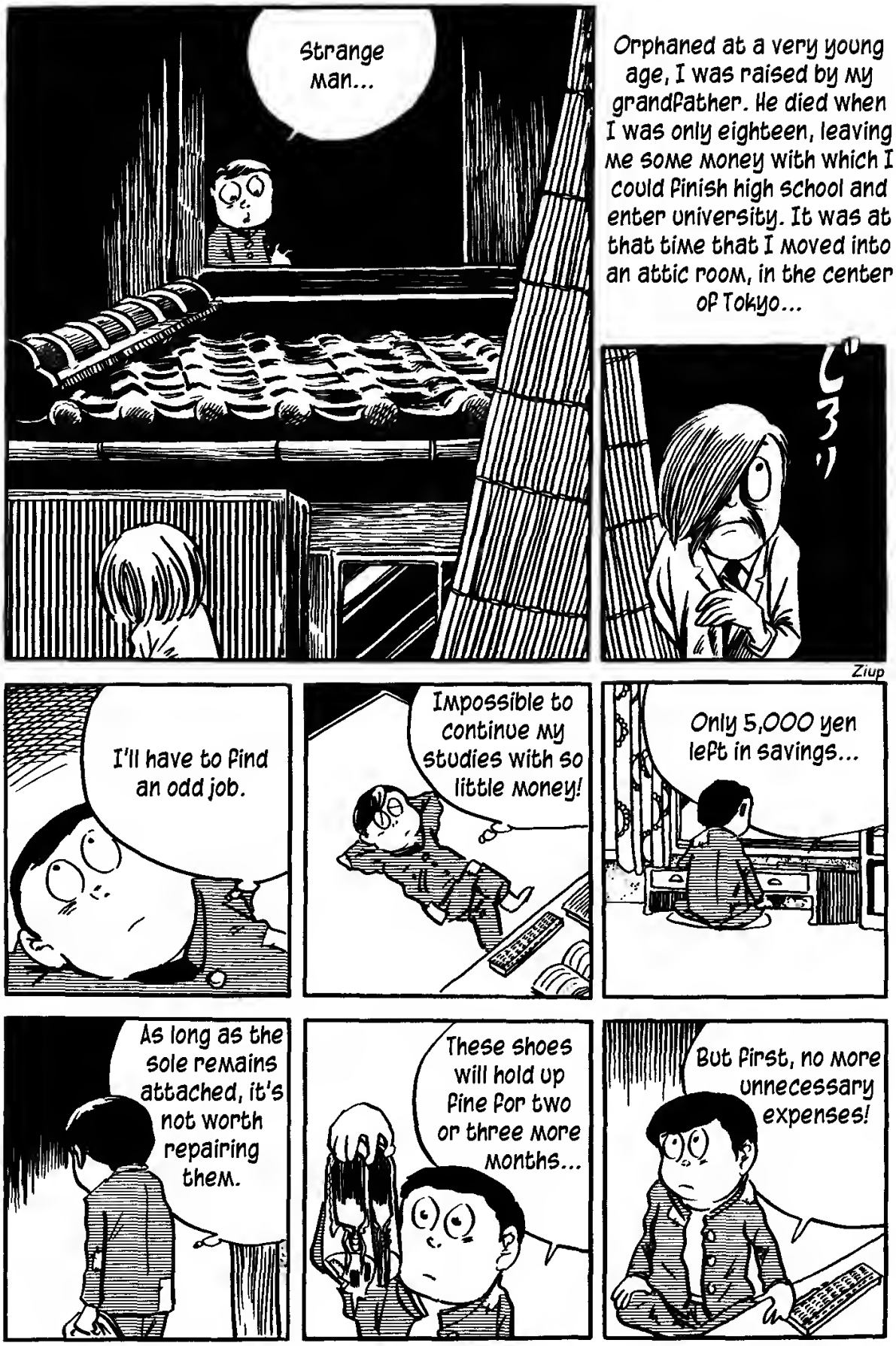

I think I understand. He travels everywhere in Japan, to help children who have a hard life, like me.


...I'm the only one who knows his secret!
But here, in this town...


Hello! Your newspaper!
At this thought, Santa felt privileged. And so, it's with a light heart this morning that he delivered newspapers across the city.

The Inheritance

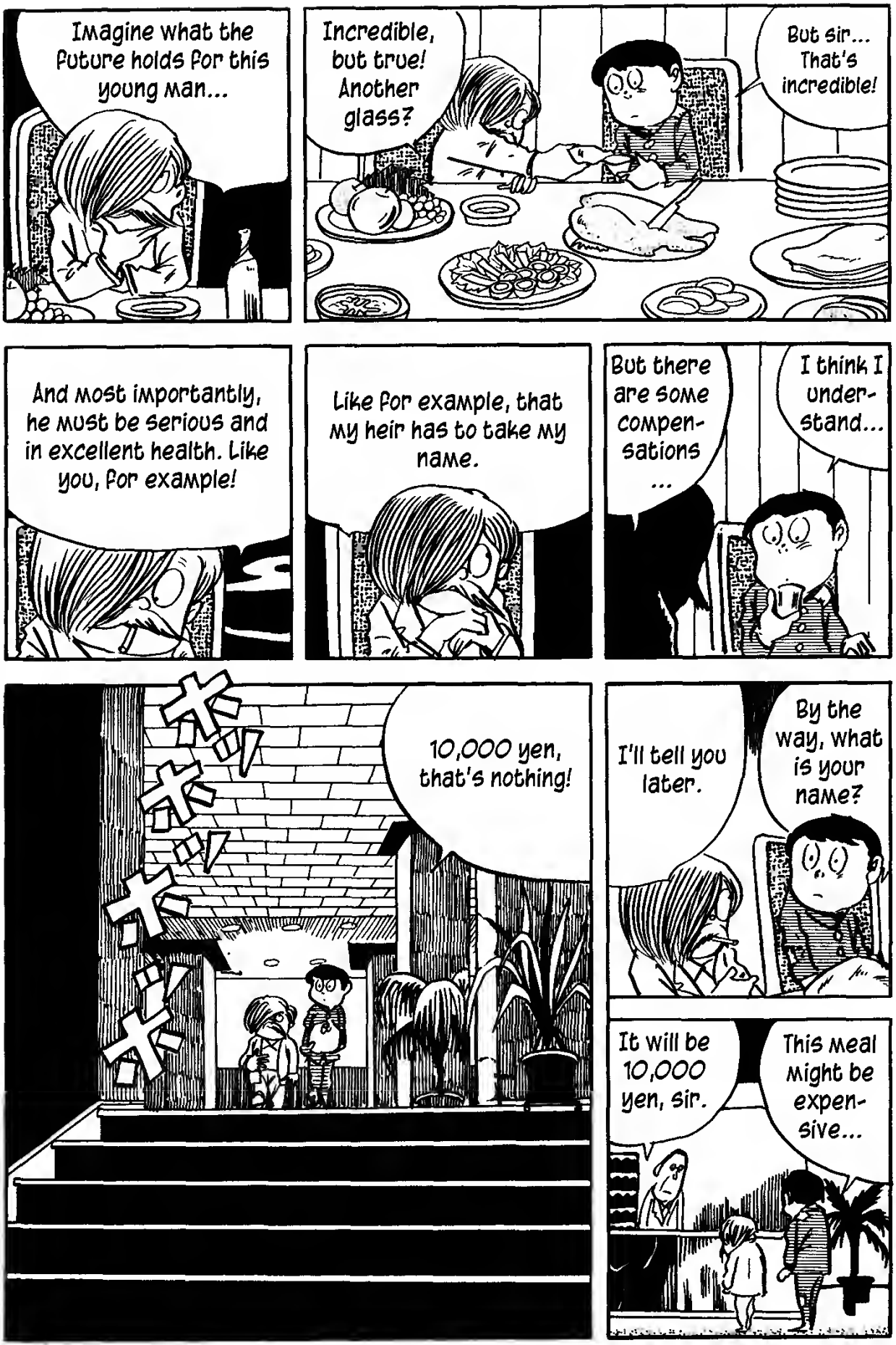



Strange man...
Orphaned at a very young age, I was raised by my grandfather. He died when I was only eighteen, leaving me some money with which I could finish high school and enter university. It was at that time that I moved into an attic room, in the center of Tokyo...
じっ
Ziup
I'll have to find an odd job.
Impossible to continue my studies with so little money!
Only 5,000 yen left in savings...
As long as the sole remains attached, it's not worth repairing them.
These shoes will hold up fine for two or three more months...
But first, no more unnecessary expenses!

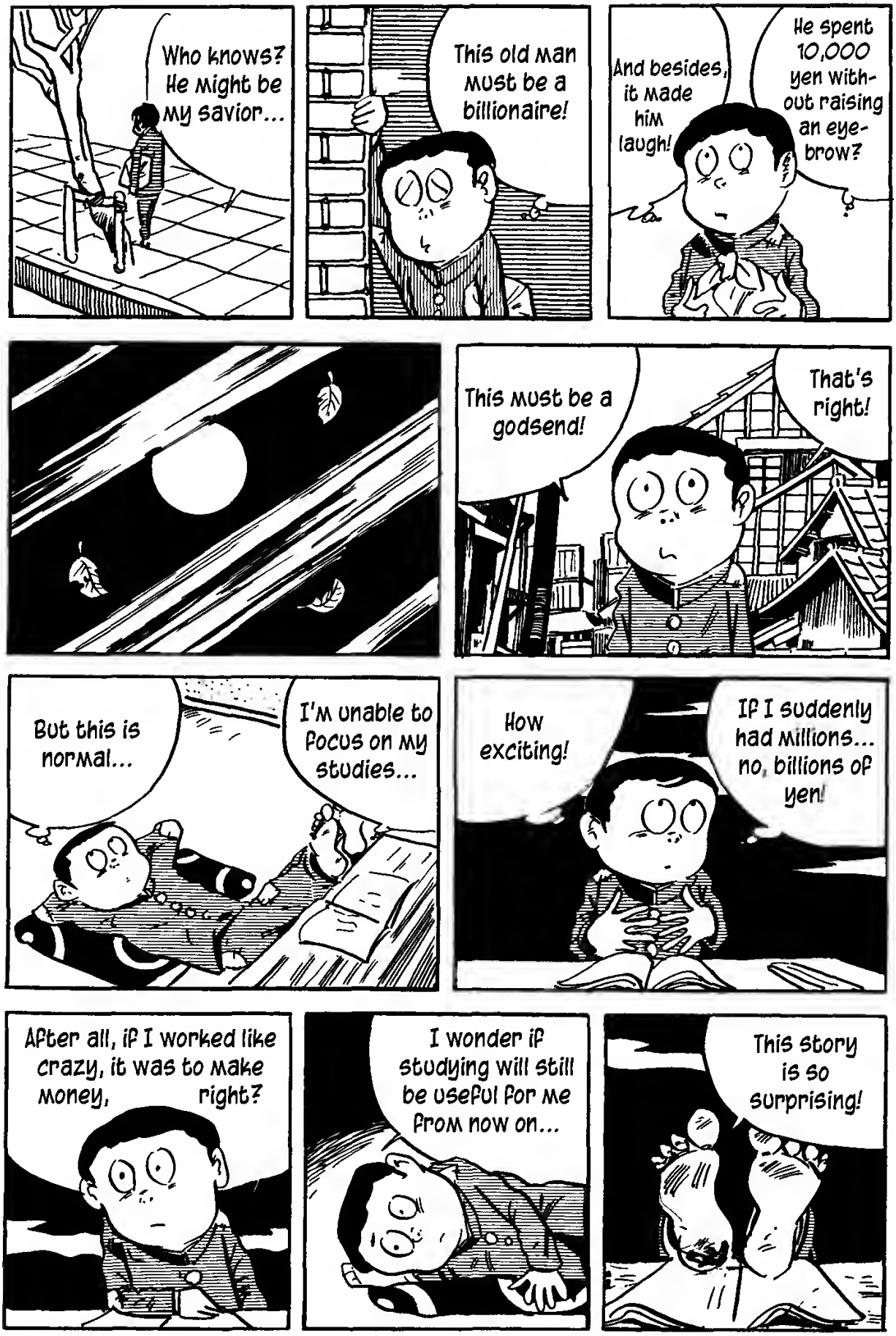
Ah, it's the old man from earlier.
Ah, young man! I was looking for you!
I'll make them last as long as I can.
Is everything going fine for you?
Hé hé hé
You see, I forgot your address, he-he-he!
Isn't that so, Mr. Kitagawa?
Hmm, you must be wondering who I am...
Uh...
Don't be embarrassed.
A friend?
I am more like, let's say... a friend.
Hey, I won't eat you!

Uh...
But let's sit down in a quieter place...
It's only natural that you don't remember me.
...a long time ago...
Yes. We have already met...
But...
Don't worry, I know one really close to here.
Why not?
But I can't...
A restaurant would be perfect, because my story may be long!
Some champagne?
Please, sit down.
...to spend during my lifetime.
But an old man so rich that I have too much money...
As you can see, I'm an old man.
Well, it's high time I tell you my story.

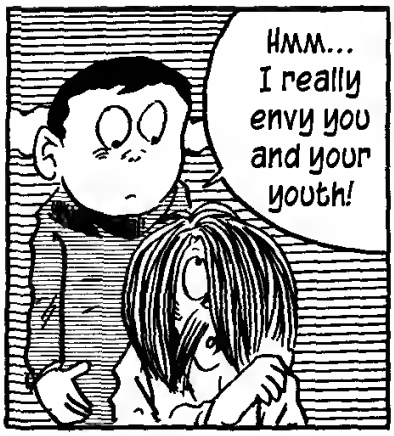
Are you following me?
Unfortunately, I have no child, no family...
I'll have to donate it before I die. You understand?
...to leave my inheritance.
...I think I found a way...
So after careful consideration ...
...a young and healthy man...
...I need ...
Actually ...
Yes. I want to leave him all that I have, without exception. Thus, this young man will be freed from financial worries and can focus fully on his studies.
All... All your estate?
...of sound mind and a heart full of hope, to entrust all my estate.


Imagine what the future holds for this young man...
Incredible, but true! Another glass?
But sir... That's incredible!
And most importantly, he must be serious and in excellent health. Like you, for example!
Like for example, that my heir has to take my name.
But there are some compensations ...
I think I understand...
ボッ ボッ ボッ
10,000 yen, that's nothing!
I'll tell you later.
By the way, what is your name?
It will be 10,000 yen, sir.
This meal might be expensive...

Hé hé hé hé


Who knows? He might be my savior...
This old man must be a billionaire!
He spent 10,000 yen without raising an eyebrow?
And besides, it made him laugh!
That's right!
This must be a godsend!
I'm unable to focus on my studies...
But this is normal...
How exciting!
If I suddenly had millions... no, billions of yen!
After all, if I worked like crazy, it was to make money, right?
I wonder if studying will still be useful for me from now on...
This story is so surprising!

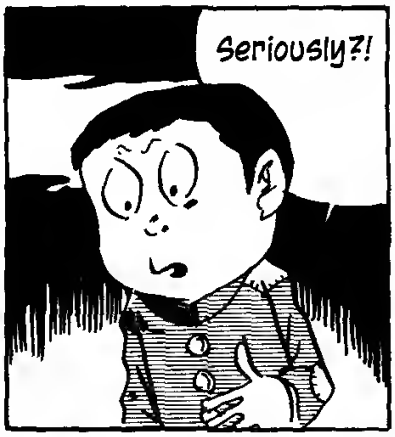
Yeah, no need to bother with studying anymore!
...since this old man wants to leave me his fortune.
However, my situation has changed...
I'm what they call a happy man!
Life will be much more pleasant, with all that money.
Sadly... rheumatism, neuralgia, not to mention other, more painful aches...
Well, you lost an awful lot of weight!
Ah, it's him!
Ohéé

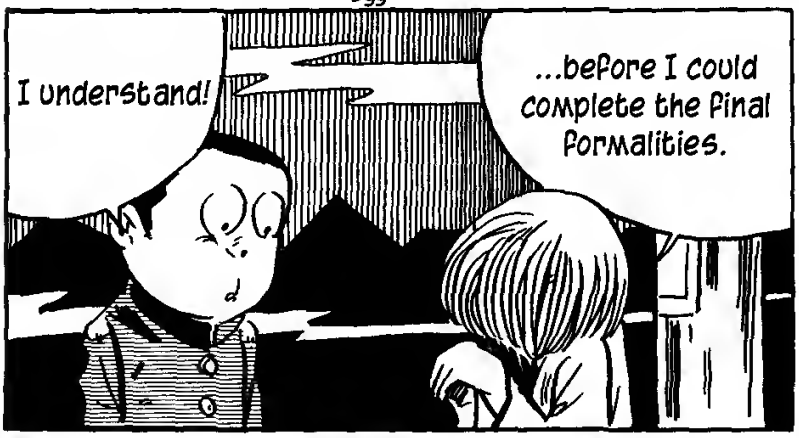


Kof kof

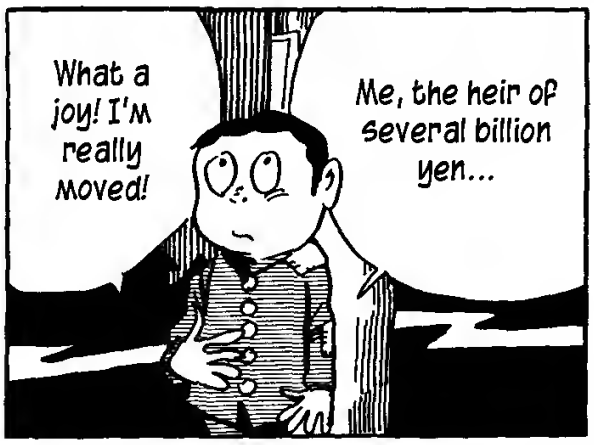
Kof kof

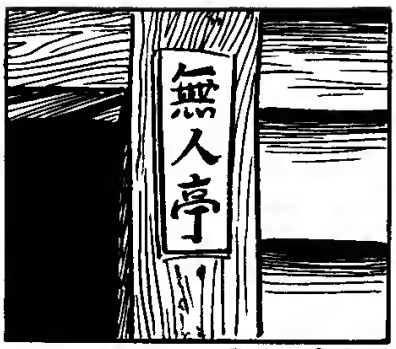
Ggg



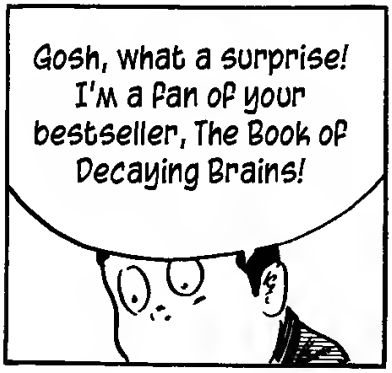


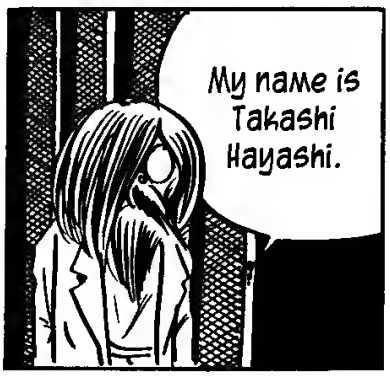
Fiouh

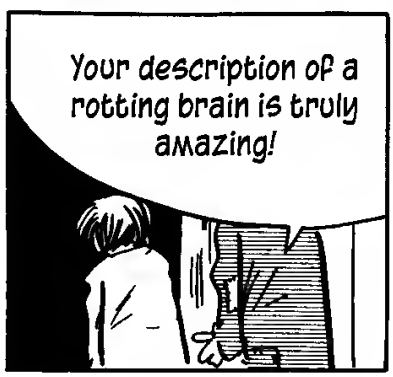


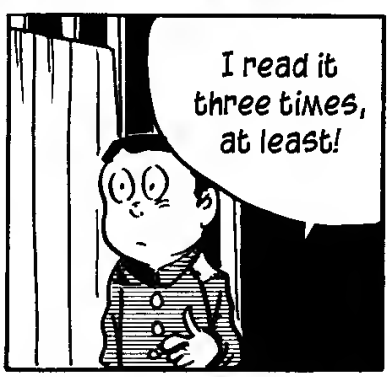


The Lost Orchard









...let me first tell you how honored I am to be the heir of such an outstanding scientist!
Yes but...
Come sit down. These few dishes should please you.
What an appetite you have! It's amazing!
I thank you, and heaven too!
Cronch
Miam miam
I don't have much longer. So I prefer to tell you everything this evening, before it's too late.
A drop of whiskey?
Please, treat yourself!
He's already drunk... this will help me settle it.
My inheritance... That sounds great!

You... you're right, Professor!
This is the promise of a bright future...
What capacity! I'm impressed!
ゴクゴク
In addition, you do me the honor of giving me your name!
My future is bright, and it's thanks to you!
...may be more valuable than my future... No?
ヒソ
This past...
You, you have a brilliant past.
...To take my name and my position and become...
Are you really willing to sacrifice your future...?
スーッ
Zip

ウフフフ
Given your reputation, I say yes, a thousand times yes!
...the heir to all my estate?
Hé hé hé
...the product of my latest research, as yet unpublished.
This is...
...what it is.
I leave you to guess...
...to make a toast.
Now it's time...
Hé hé hé hé hé

Grab two glasses up there, please.
Fssss
May my donation go off without a hitch!
Now, toast!
Glou
Glou
Viu
My young friend... you hear me?
Glou

My... head is spinning.
Are you feeling unwell?
Already 8:30 p.m.? Excuse me, I have a conference. I have to leave you.
Oh!
Take this before sleeping. It will soothe you.
When I regained consciousness, I was walking on an unknown street. I felt something tingle inside my head, and my legs, without me ordering anything to them, walked in a specific direction that only they knew.

Tap tap tap

Is it the wine that makes me feel this way?
カ
I feel weird...
Croaaa
Hou hou hou
ガラ
ガラ
Clac
My head... It's as if I had two different brains...
Well, I feel that this house is calling to me...

...to take it before sleeping.
He told me...
Ah, I forgot the professor's pill! This should relieve my headache.
But what is...
I hope it will reduce the pain...
It must be the effects of the pill... Ooh, I feel paralyzed...
They look like eyes... they're getting closer?

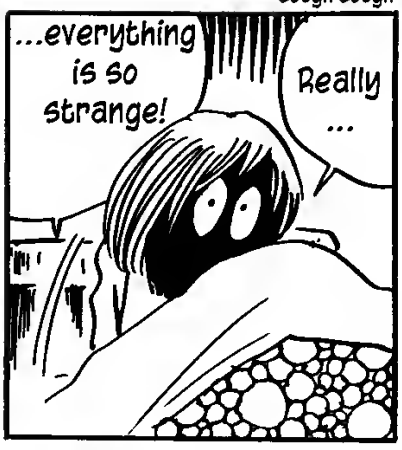
Damn, what a nightmare!
?
Hi hi hi hi
I slept in a bed?!
Boum
What?!
But, this isn't my home!
I don't even remember going to bed!
Eh?
Yet, it seems quite real...
...
Still a bad dream?

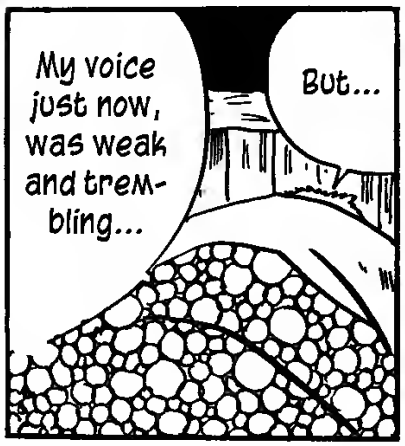
ゴホッ ゴホッ ゴホッ

Cough Cough

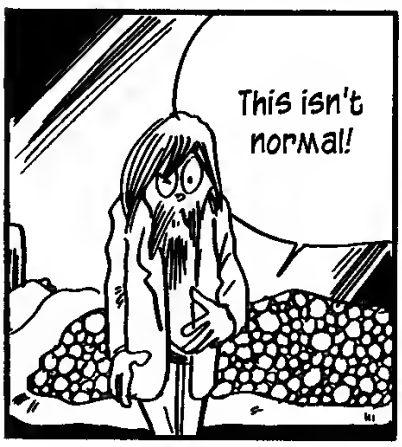
There's no doubt, I must be dreaming.

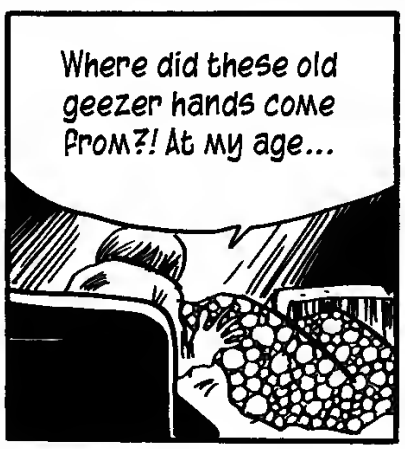
That's impos-sible!
My teeth! I only have three left?!


...everything is so strange!
Really ...


My voice just now, was weak and trem-bling...
But...

Come on, when I wake up, this story will only be a bad memory.

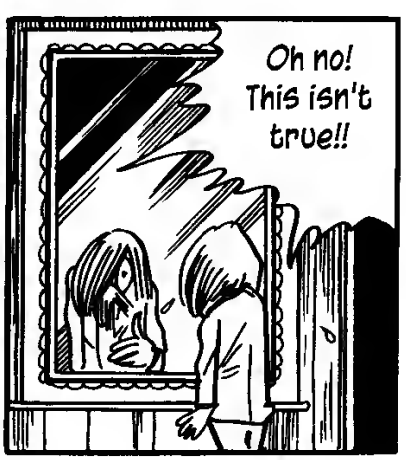

This isn't normal!

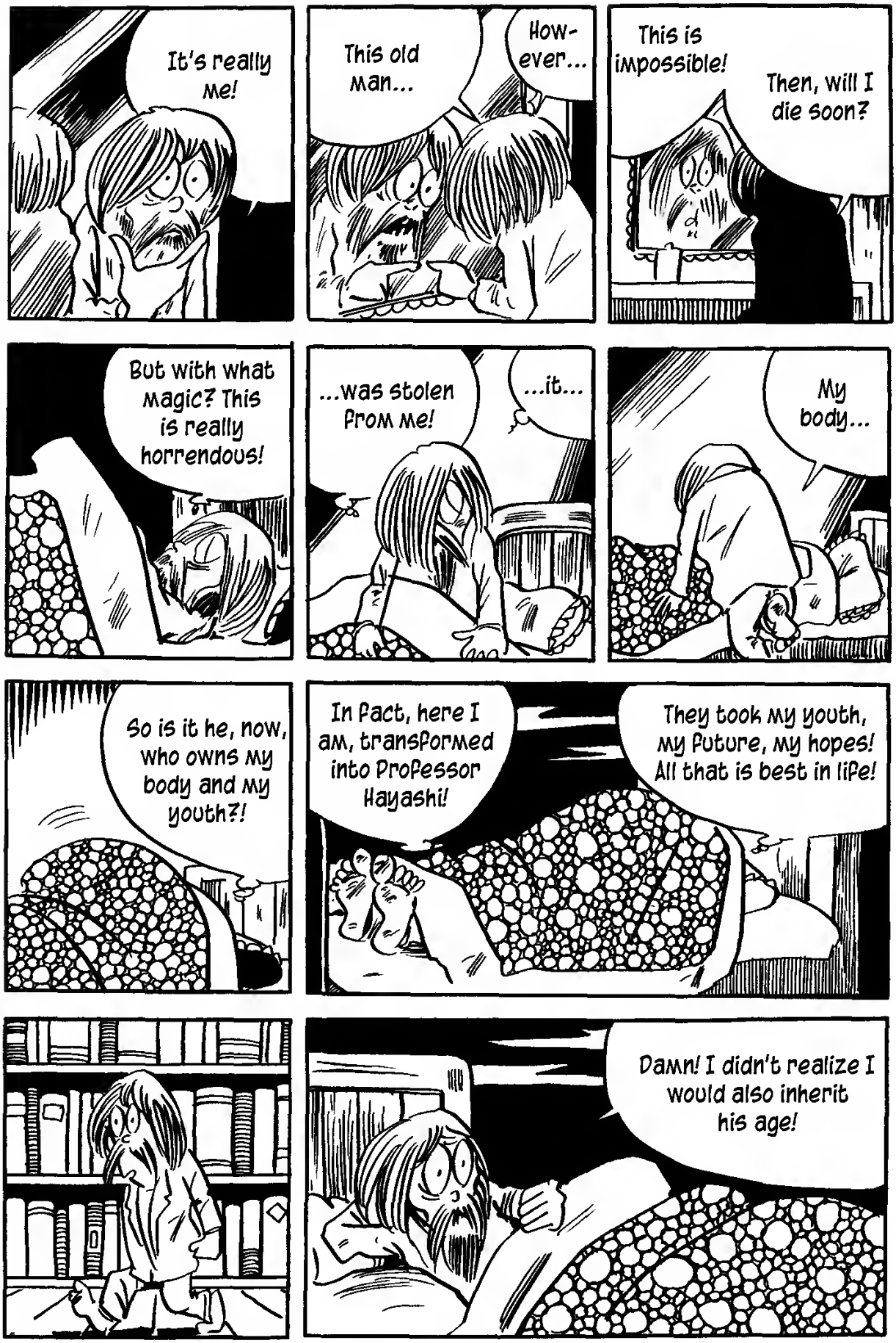

Where did these old geezer hands come from?! At my age...

Ah! My hands!!

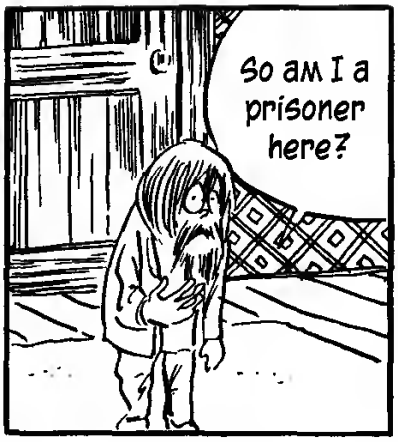
I can't believe it!
No!

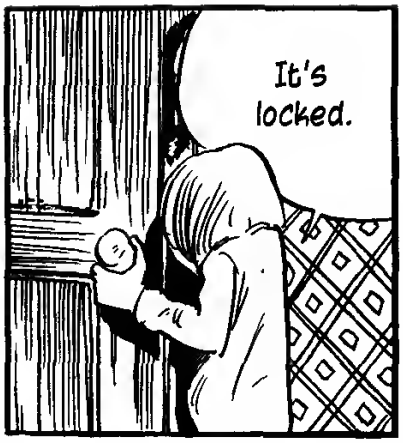
I aged all of a sudden!!

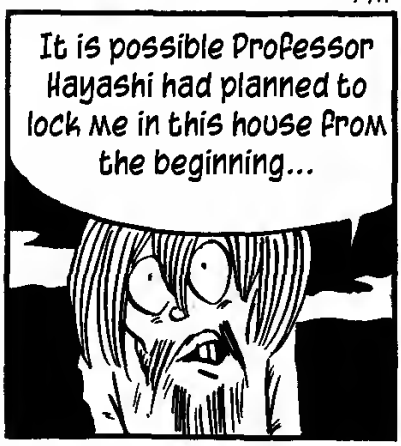

Oh no! This isn't true!!

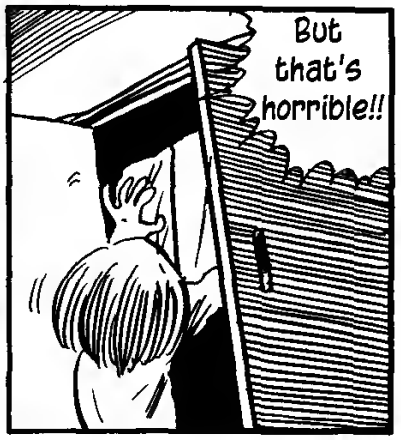

It's really me!
This old man...
How-ever...
This is impossible!
Then, will I die soon?
But with what magic? This is really horrendous!
...was stolen from me!
...it...
My body...
So is it he, now, who owns my body and my youth?!
In fact, here I am, transformed into Professor Hayashi!
They took my youth, my future, my hopes! All that is best in life!
Damn! I didn't realize I would also inherit his age!

Ffh







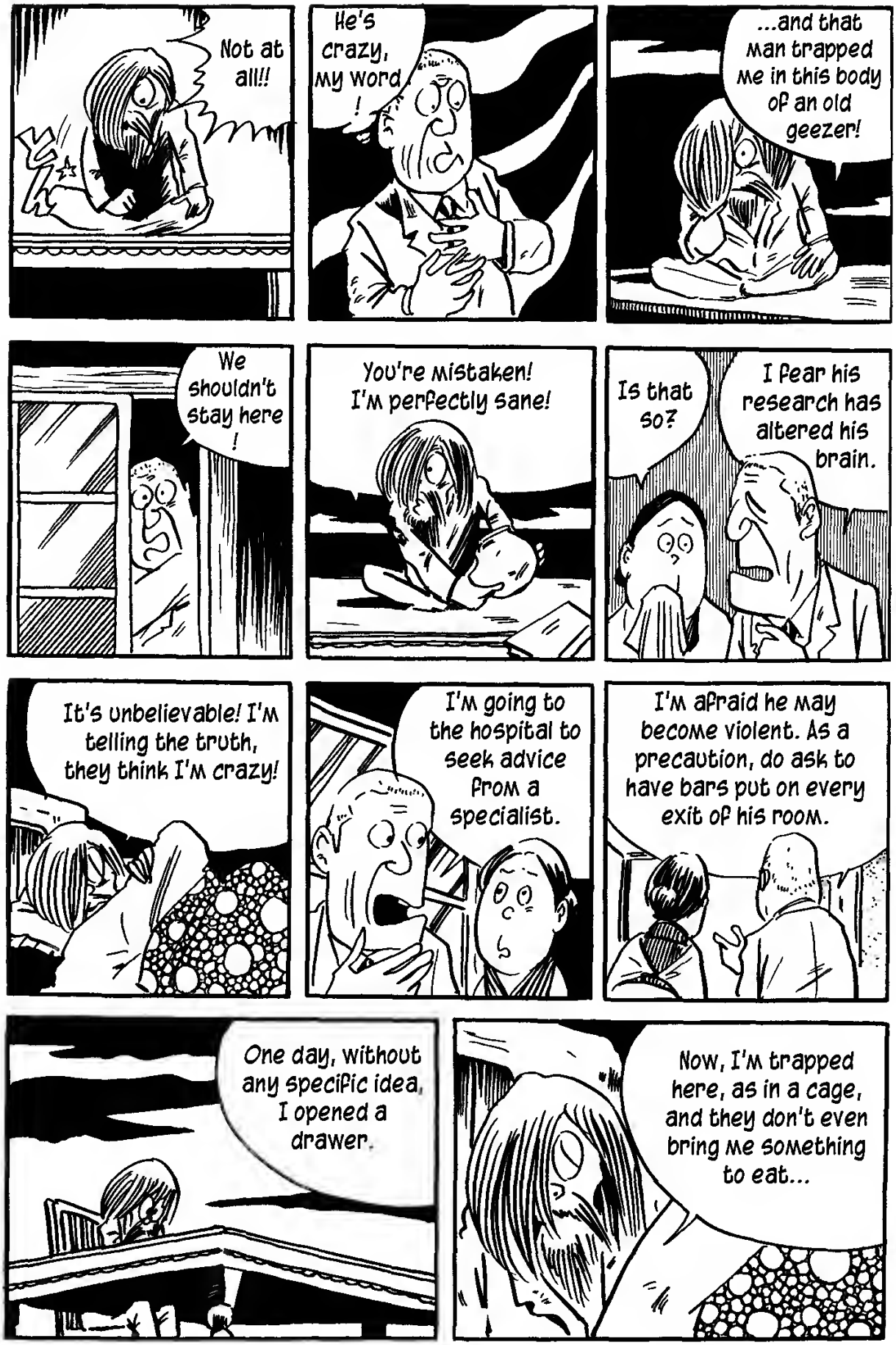


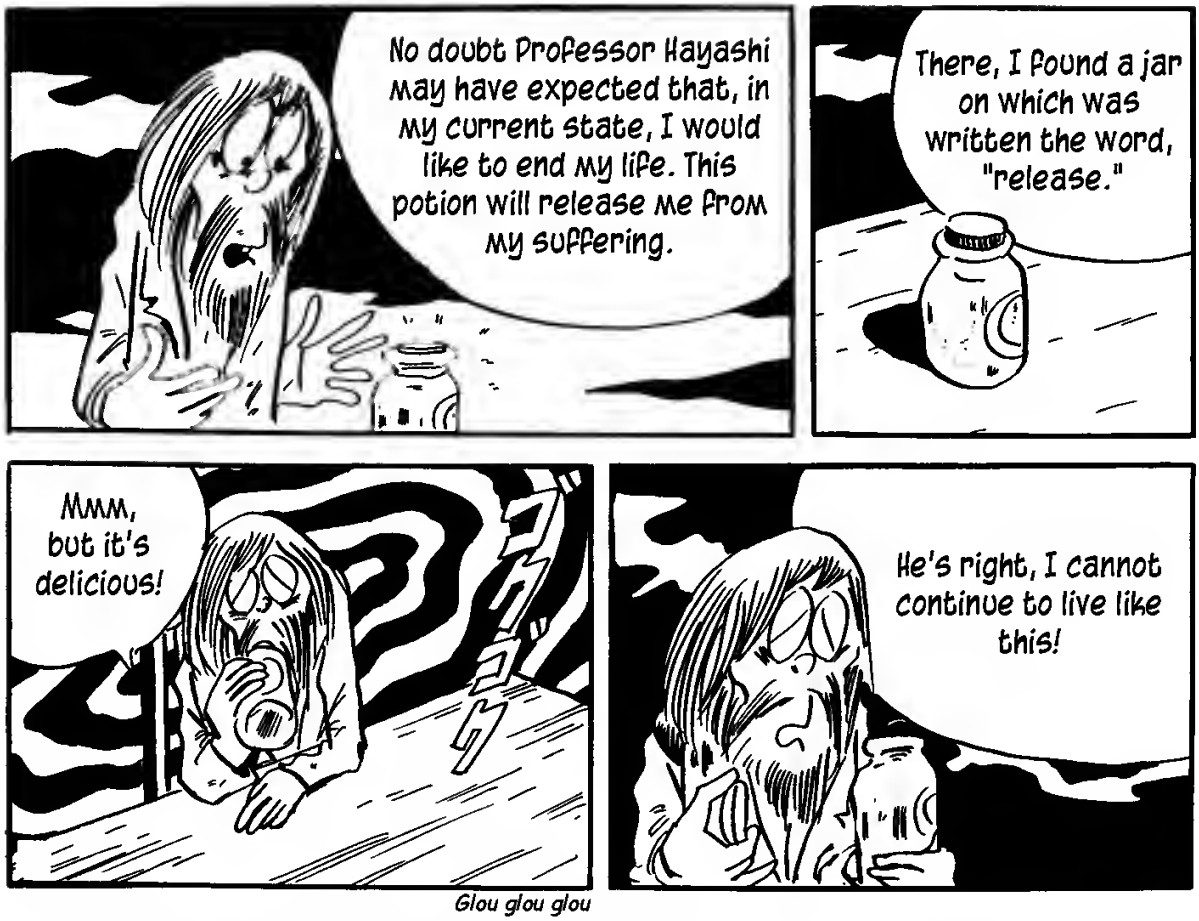
Sssshac

Clac

Me, but...
Answer me!!
Who... Who are you?!
What is it, Professor?
Dr. Hibino came to visit you.
What do you want from me?
Come on, you aren't married! I'm your housemaid!
Are you Hayashi's wife?! Or a monster, perhaps?!
What a mess! What happened?
Are you alright, Professor?
Dr. Hibino?
キョ〜!
Don't get smart with me! You know full well what happened to me! Two days ago, I was still a student with a bright future...
What comedy?
That's enough! This comedy has to stop!

Excuse me?!

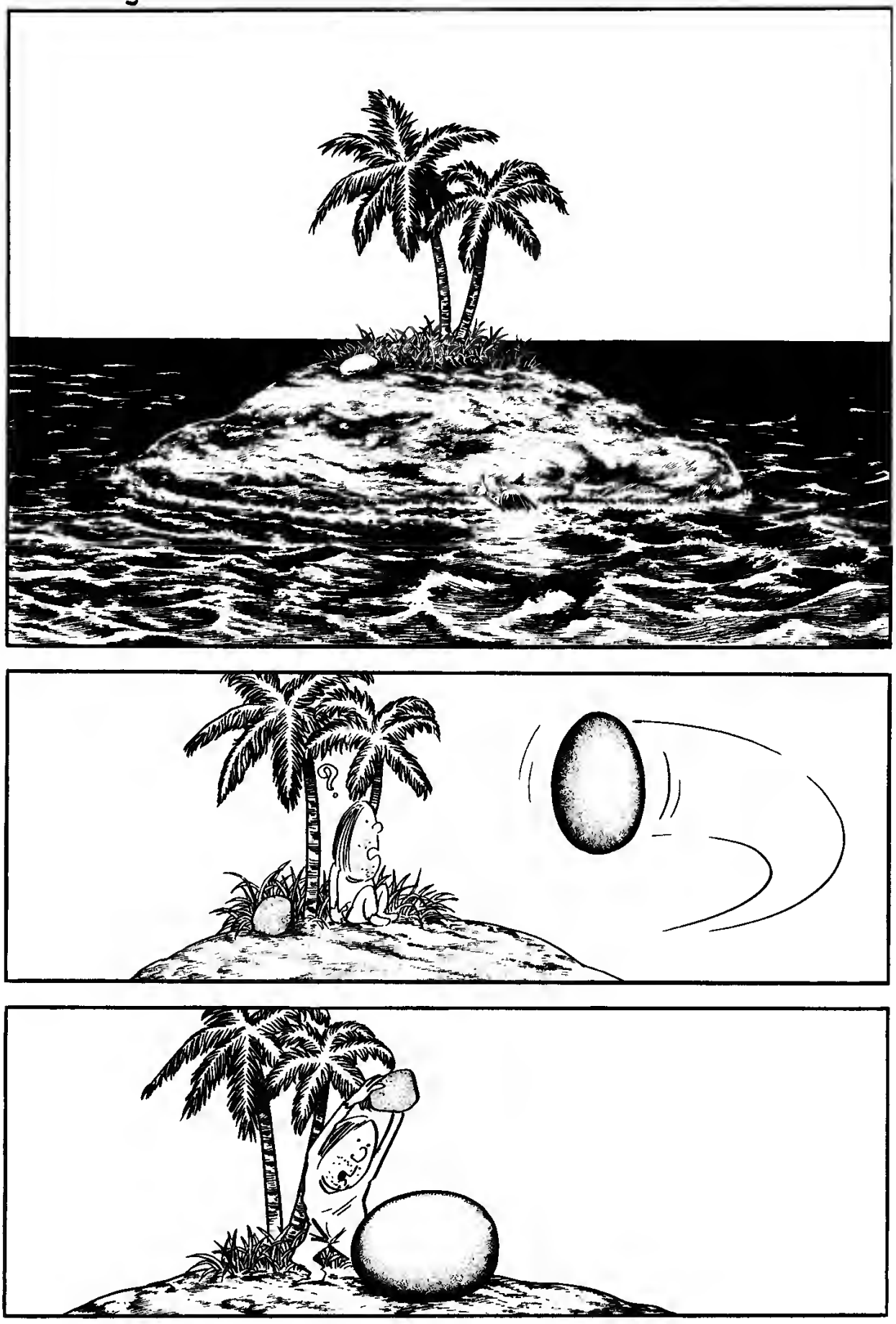

Not at all!!
He's crazy, my word!
...and that man trapped me in this body of an old geezer!
We shouldn't stay here!
You're mistaken! I'm perfectly sane!
Is that so?
I fear his research has altered his brain.
It's unbelievable! I'm telling the truth, they think I'm crazy!
I'm going to the hospital to seek advice from a specialist.
I'm afraid he may become violent. As a precaution, do ask to have bars put on every exit of his room.
One day, without any specific idea, I opened a drawer.
Now, I'm trapped here, as in a cage, and they don't even bring me something to eat...

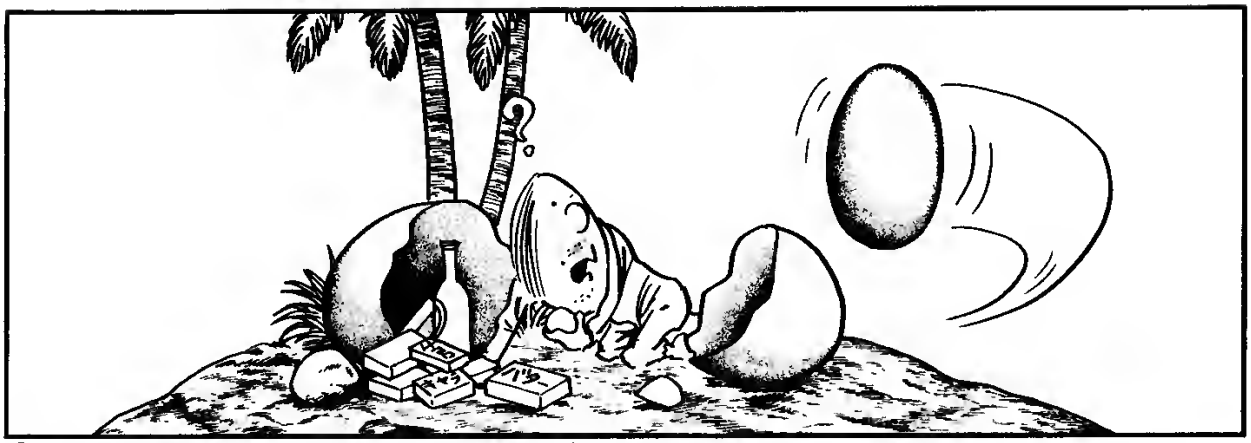

No doubt Professor Hayashi may have expected that, in my current state, I would like to end my life. This potion will release me from my suffering.
There, I found a jar on which was written the word, "release."
Mmm, but it's delicious!
He's right, I cannot continue to live like this!

Glou glou glou

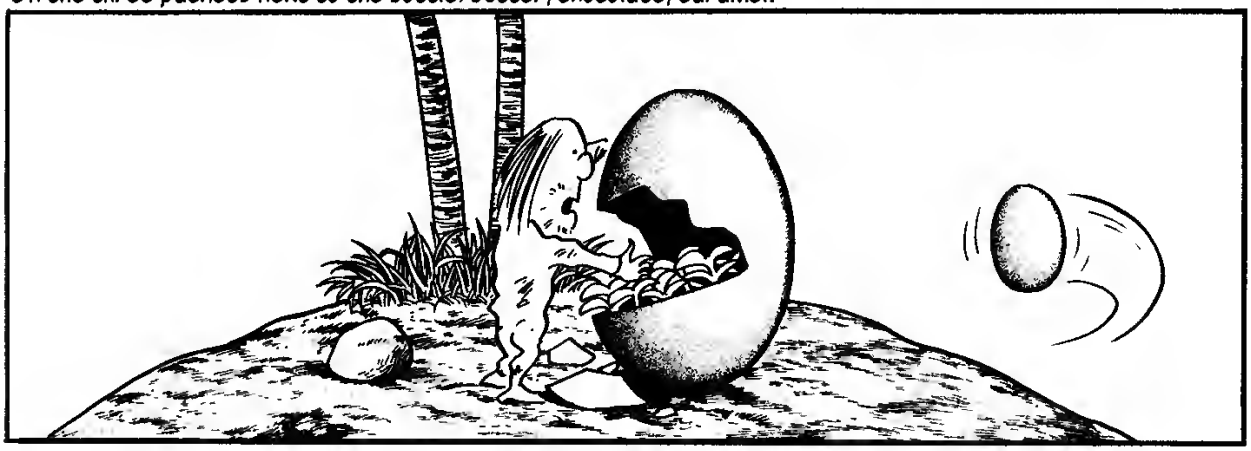
The next day, Professor Hayashi's body was found, lying at home, inanimate. Of course, the real Hayashi continues to live somewhere in Tokyo under the guise of a nice young man. Once his new existence in this body runs out, we can bet that he will change skin again...
Who knows how long Professor Hayashi will manage to defy death this way...

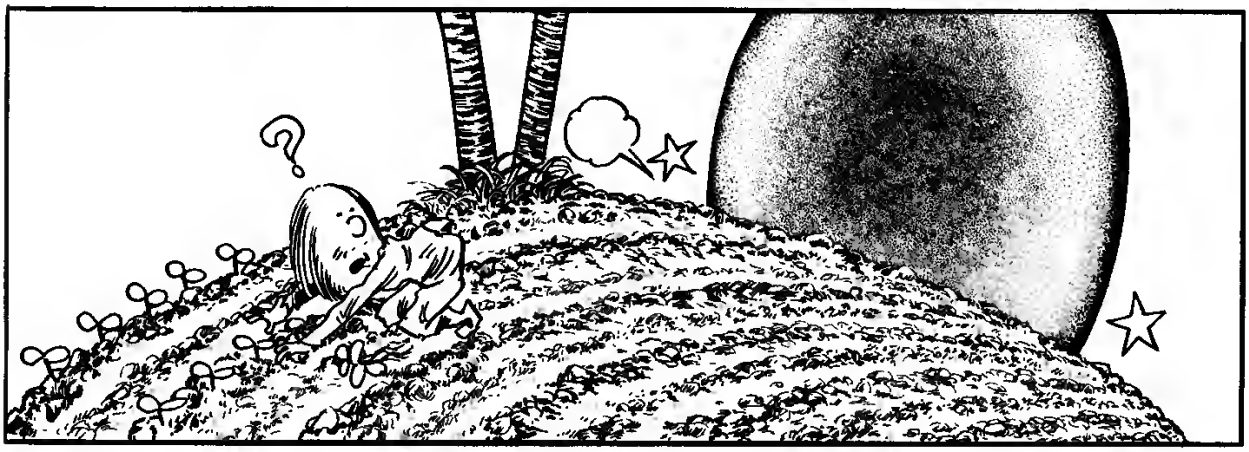
The Story of the Island

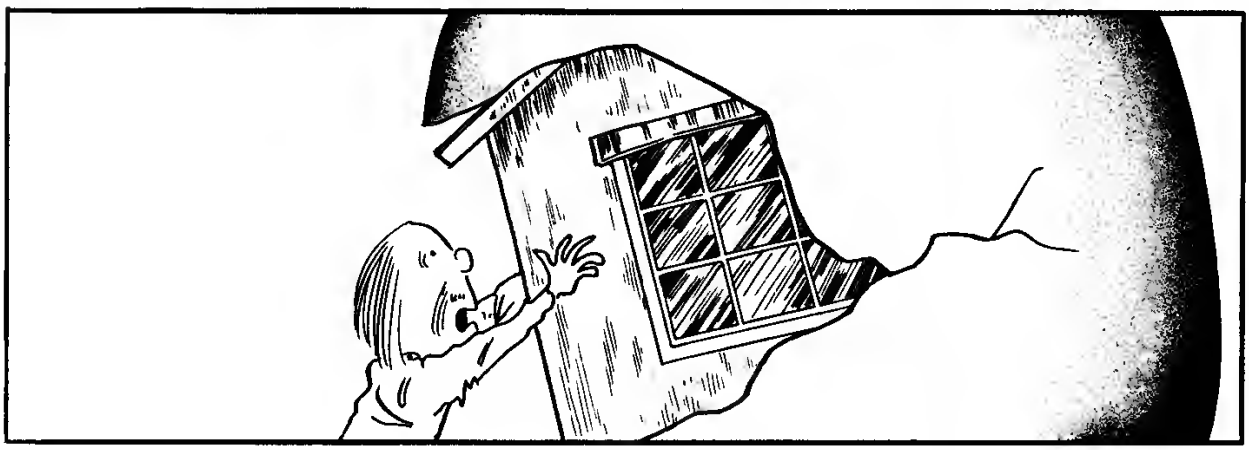


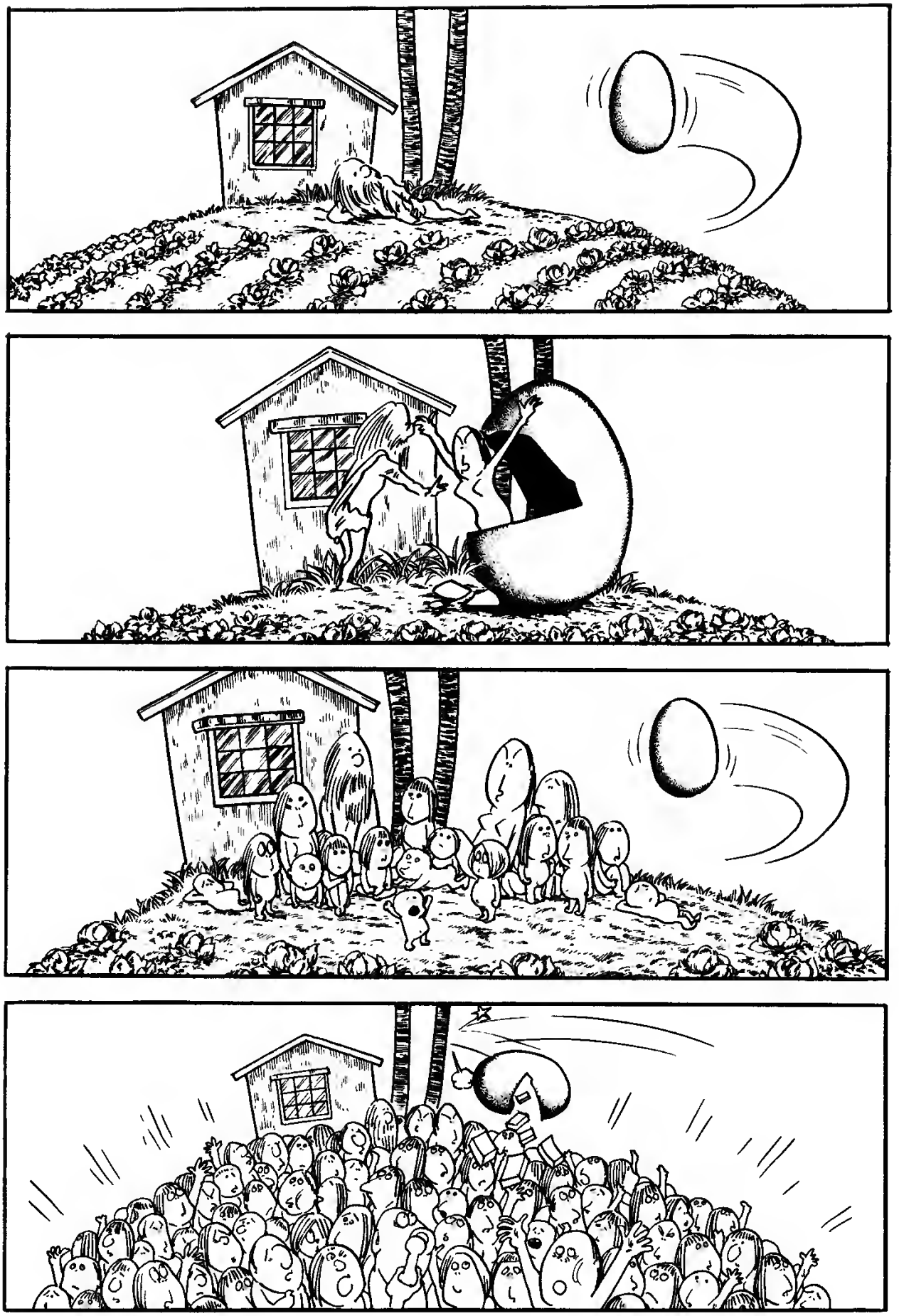


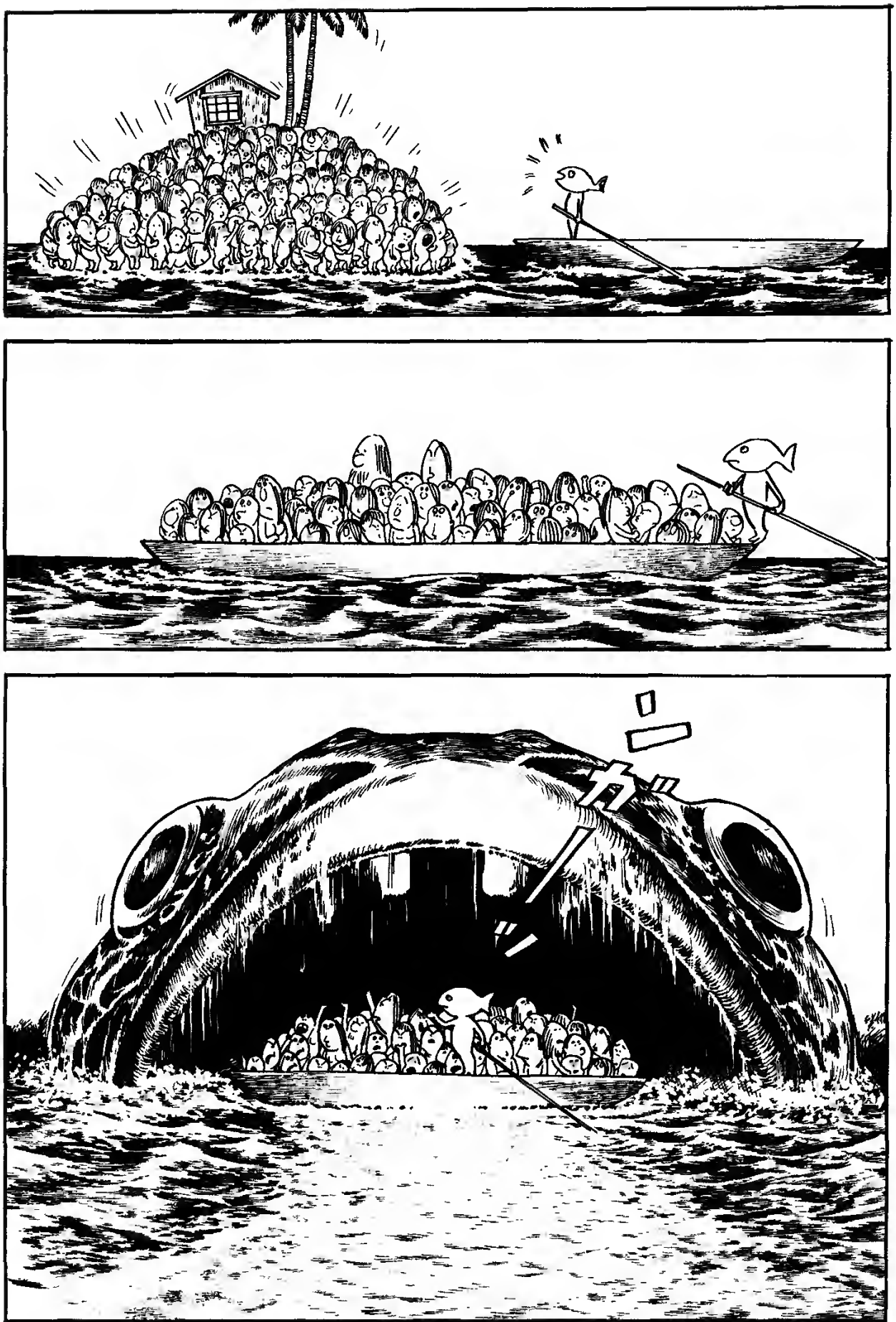
On the three packets next to the bottle: butter, chocolate, caramel.



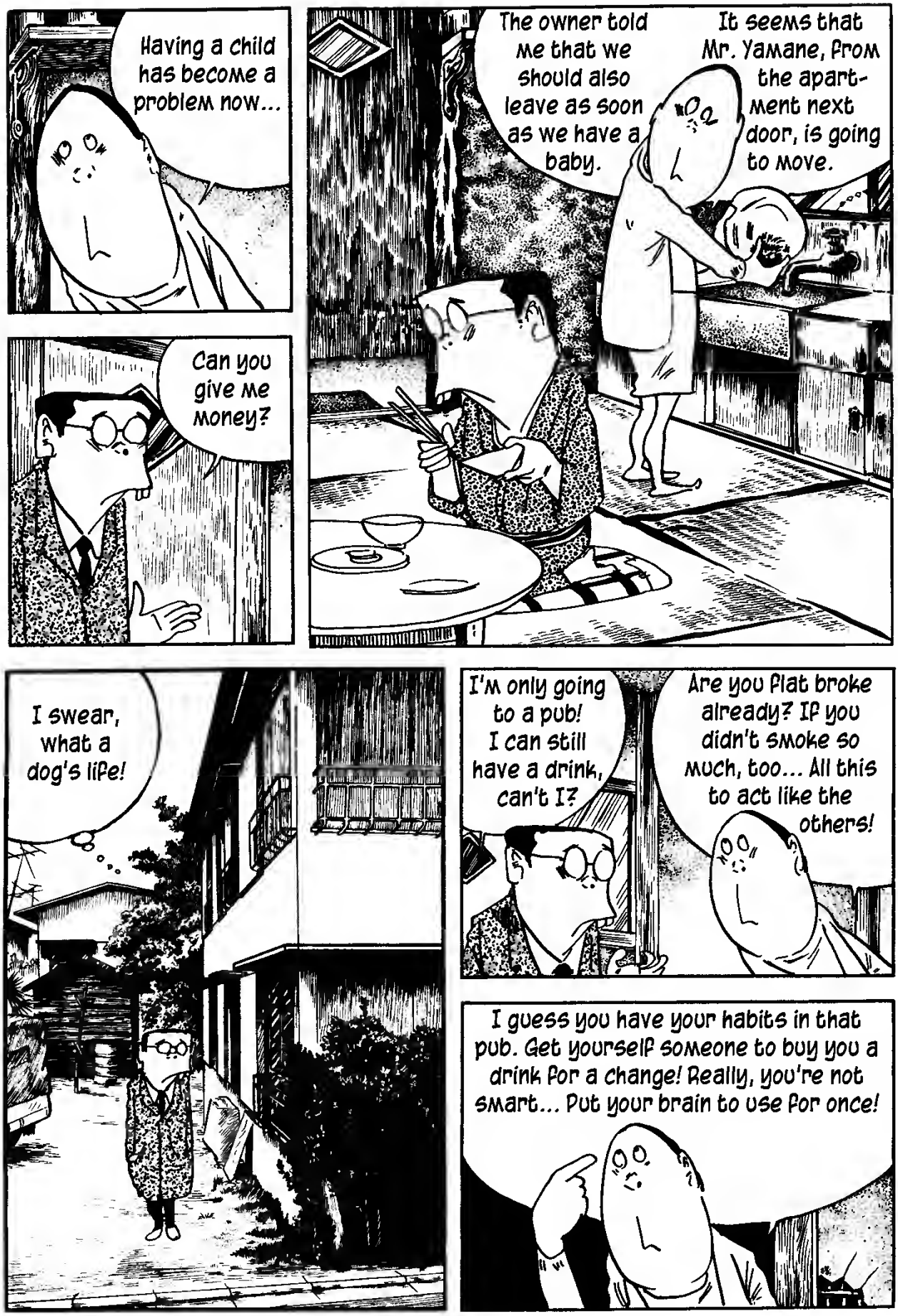






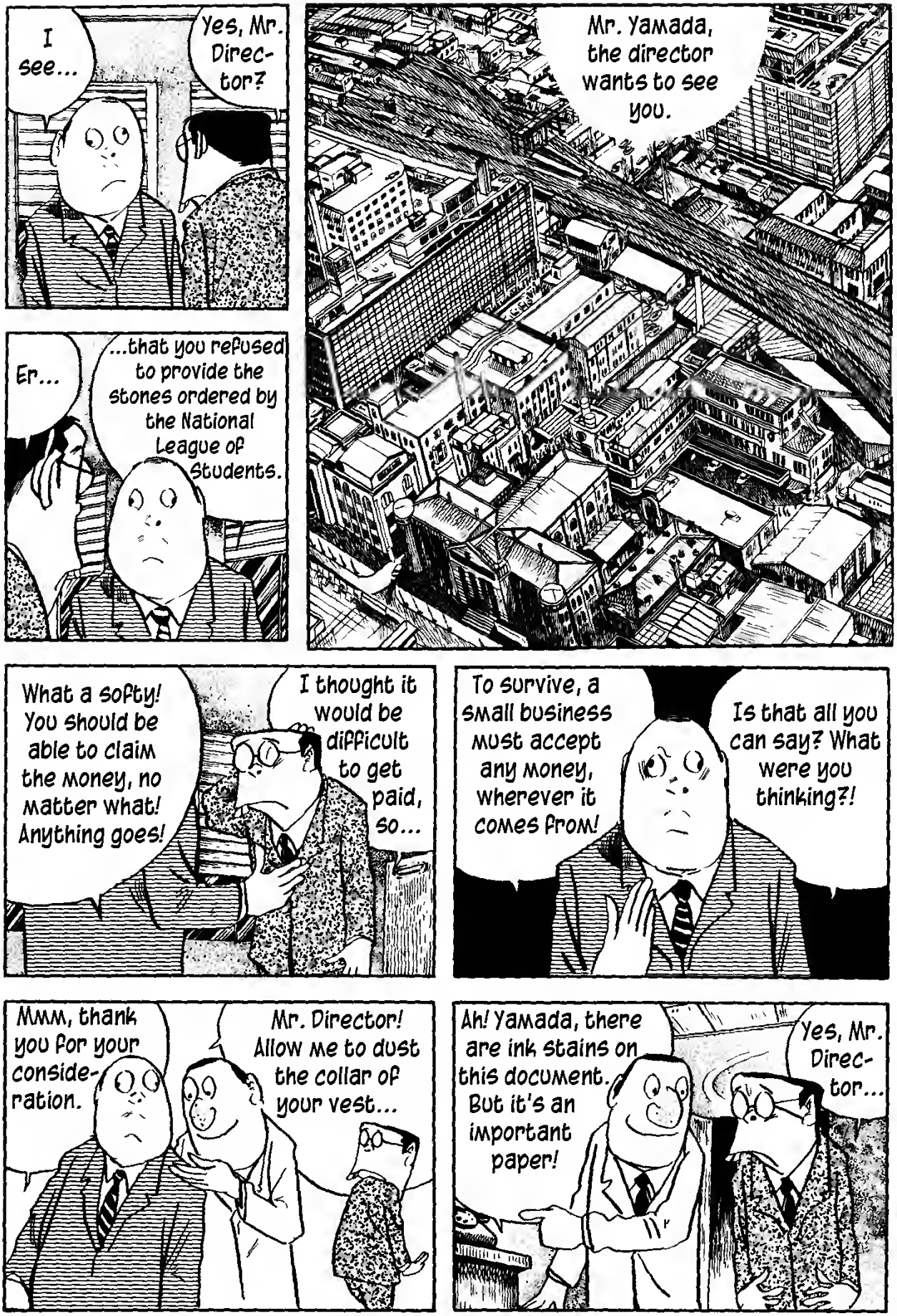

Mraaaaah

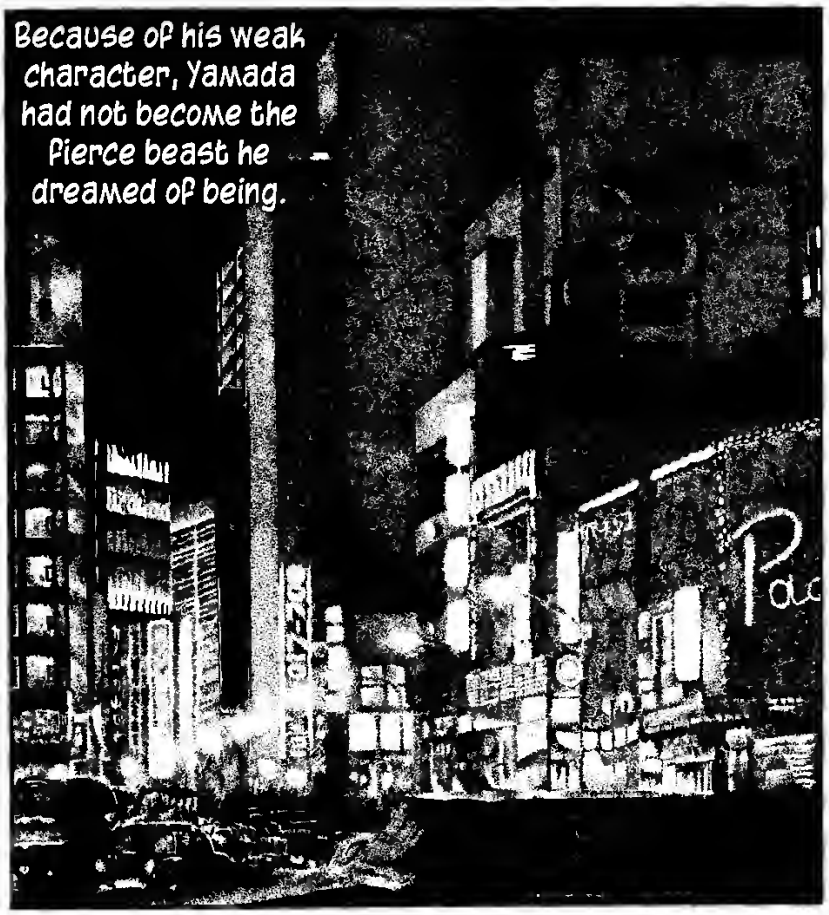
Animalus Economicus


Having a child has become a problem now...
Can you give me money?
The owner told me that we should also leave as soon as we have a baby.
It seems that Mr. Yamane, from the apartment next door, is going to move.
I swear, what a dog's life!
I'm only going to a pub! I can still have a drink, can't I?
Are you flat broke already? If you didn't smoke so much, too... All this to act like the others!
I guess you have your habits in that pub. Get yourself someone to buy you a drink for a change! Really, you're not smart... Put your brain to use for once!

Is it my fault? Am I stupid or what?
All this because I am poor...
No, rather it's society, there's the problem! What a crazy world!
It's the only way to get by in this damn city of Tokyo!
To survive, I see only one solution: to adapt and become crazy myself too!
Alright, starting today, I'll turn into an animalus economicus!
ゴトゴトゴトゴト

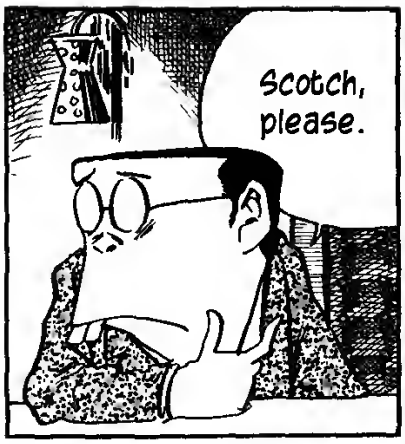
Stadam stadam

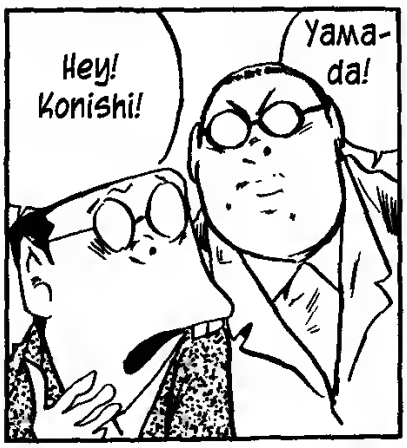

I see...
Yes, Mr. Director?
Mr. Yamada, the director wants to see you.
Er...
...that you refused to provide the stones ordered by the National League of Students.
What a softy! You should be able to claim the money, no matter what! Anything goes!
I thought it would be difficult to get paid, so...
To survive, a small business must accept any money, wherever it comes from!
Is that all you can say? What were you thinking?!
Mmm, thank you for your consideration.
Mr. Director! Allow me to dust the collar of your vest...
Ah! Yamada, there are ink stains on this document. But it's an important paper!
Yes, Mr. Director...

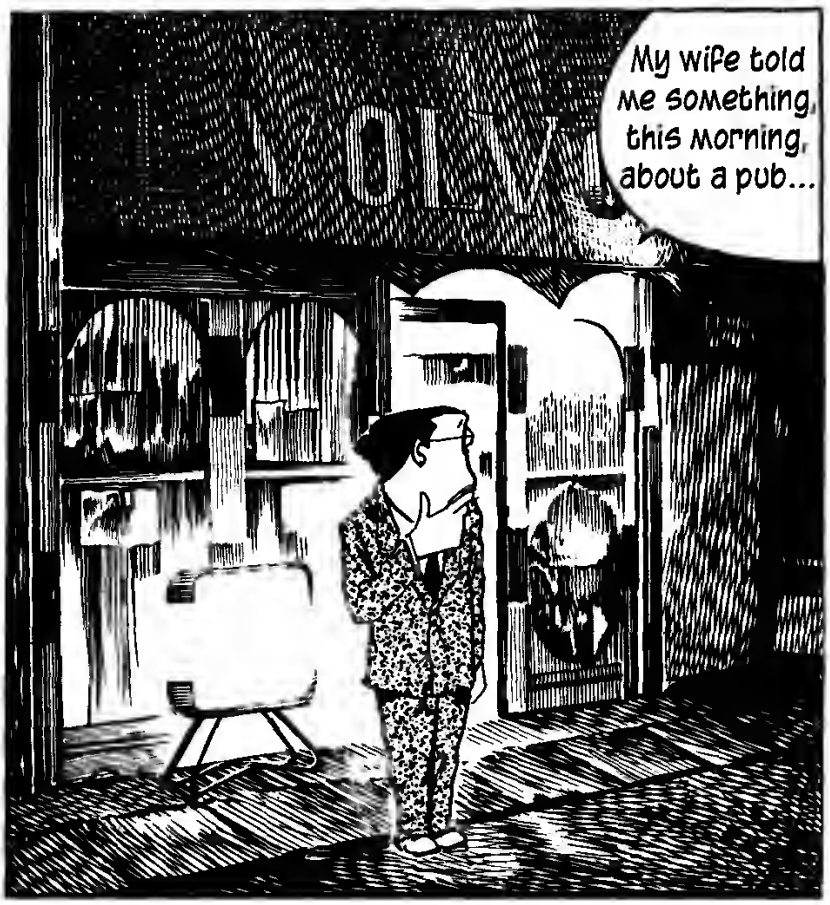

Because of his weak character, Yamada had not become the fierce beast he dreamed of being.

Obviously, the new guy is already a master at boot-licking!

Some know how to, others don't...


Scotch, please.


Hey! Konishi!
Yama-da!

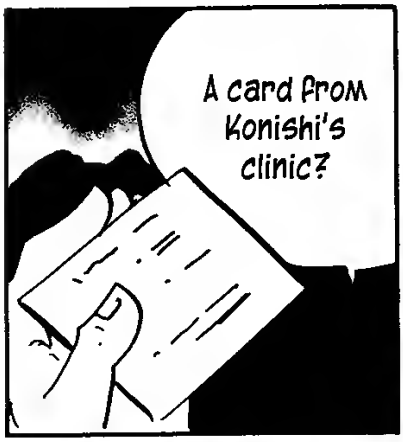

My wife told me something this morning, about a pub...

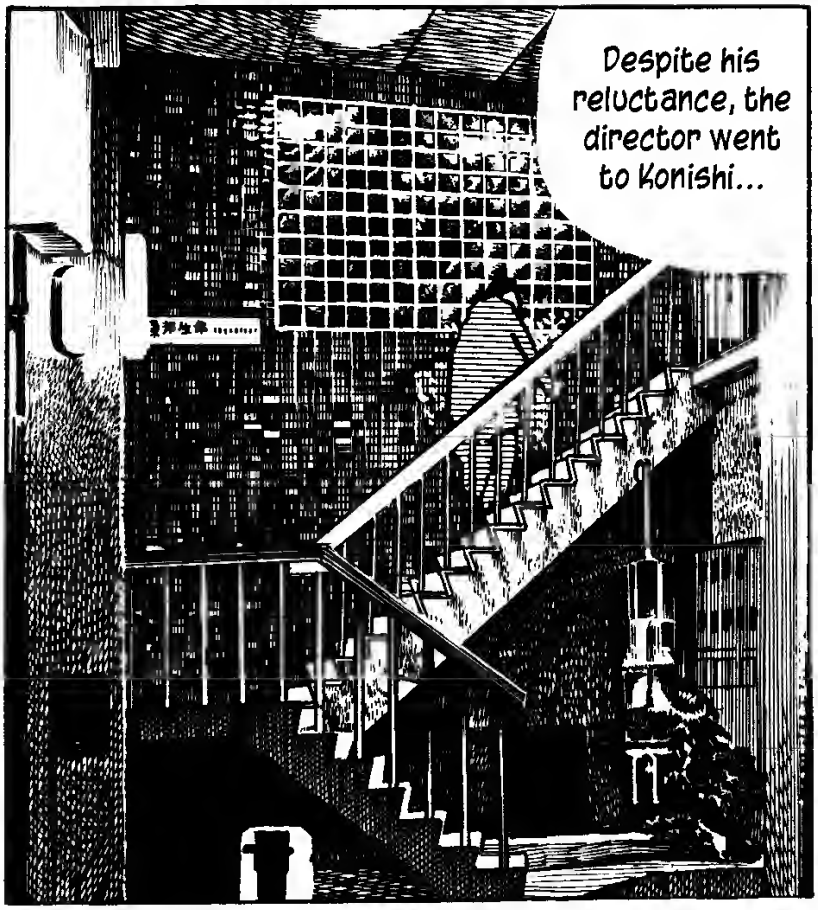
For sure! Cosmetic surgery, there's a good idea! I acquired two massage parlors...
And it pays well, I guess?
I'm not a teacher anymore, I'm a doctor now.
What a surprise to meet you in a place like this! It's more for the riffraff, here...
A face trans...
Recently, I succeeded in a face transplant experiment.
When you think about it, it's nothing surprising.
You didn't! It pays that well?!
You're a real genius, Konishi!
What are you afraid of?
Shh! Don't talk so loud!
Let's go discuss this somewhere else...
It's only an experiment. I haven't received the Nobel Prize yet!

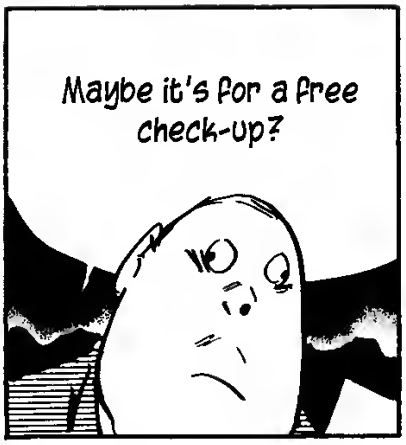
Leave us alone, tonight.
Furthermore, you're popular with women...
Good evening, Mr. Konishi.
Wait, you want me to serve as a guinea pig?!
I would like to apply my transplant technique... on a human...
Of course!
Yamada, you know I've always been a humanist, don't you?
Hey, why not swap your face with that of your director?
Exactly!
What? You mean that with a new face, I'll be happier?
That word is quite ugly, let's say I'd like to make a fairy tale, like Cinderella, but a male version... Do you follow me?
As for me, I'd love to get my best friend to benefit from the advances in science.
It's worth thinking about...
You'll have his face, but also his company!
Are you serious? That would be awesome!

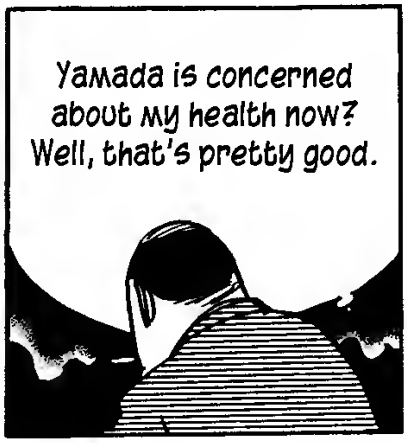
It comes from Yamada...

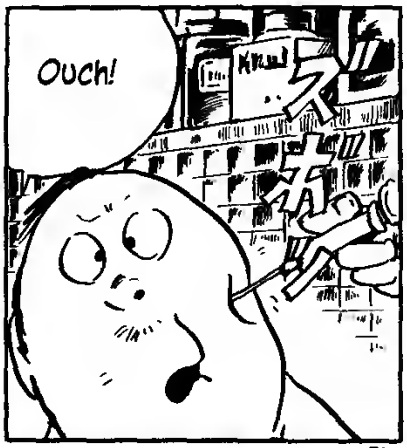
What's this?
The next day, in the director's office...

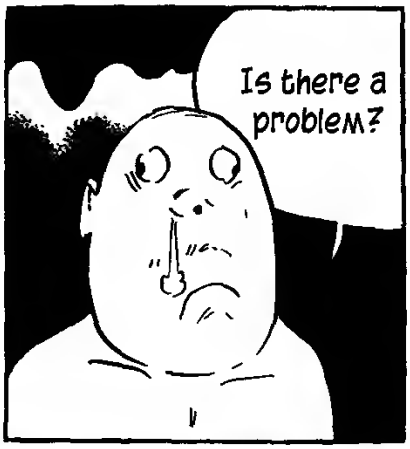

A card from Konishi's clinic?


Despite his reluctance, the director went to Konishi...

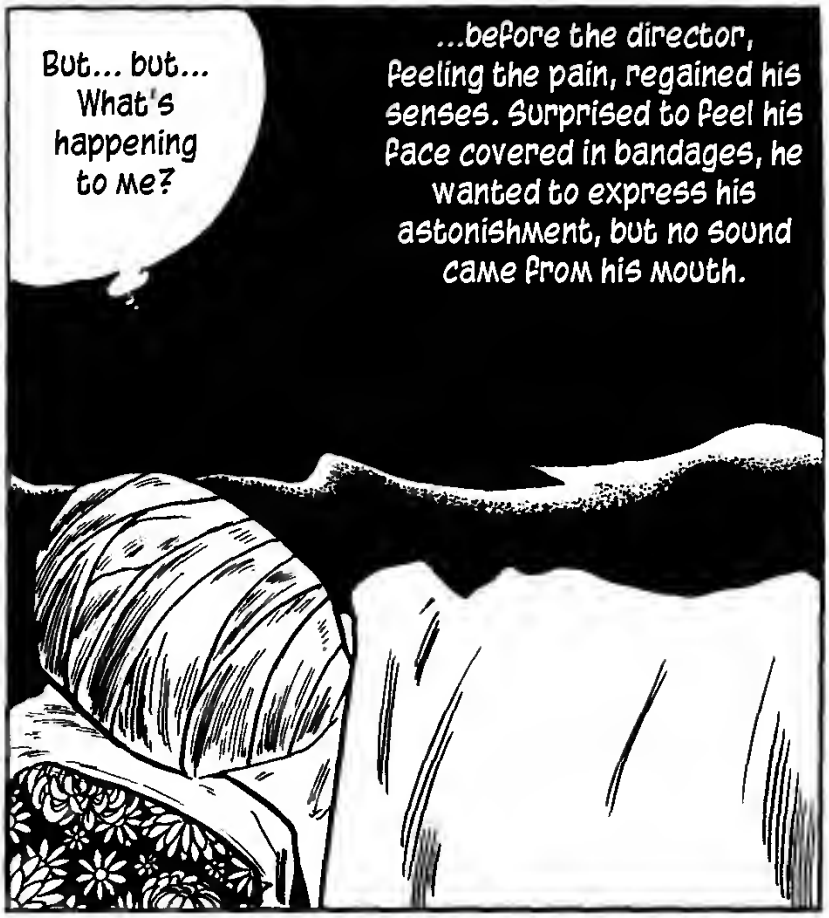

Maybe it's for a free check-up?


Yamada is concerned about my health now? Well, that's pretty good.

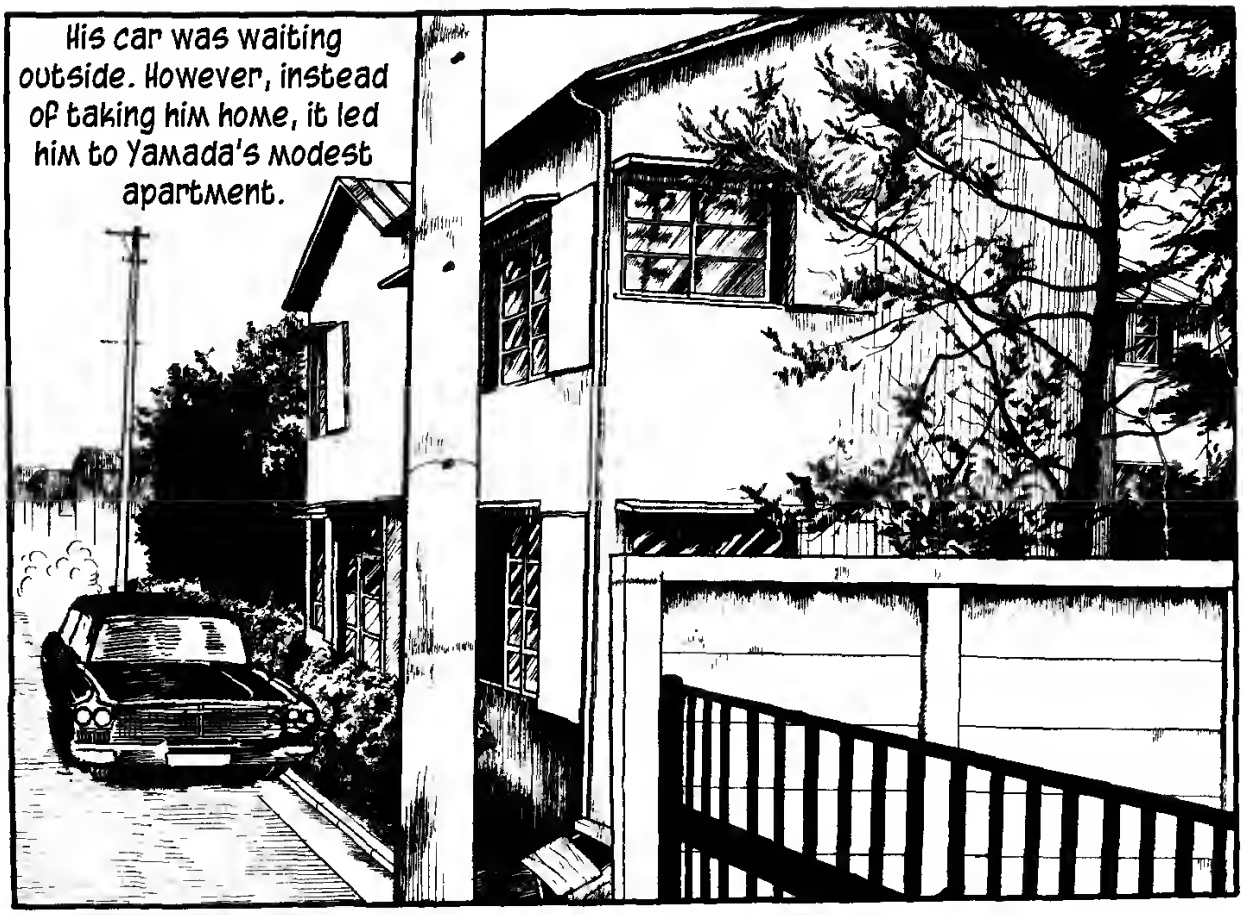




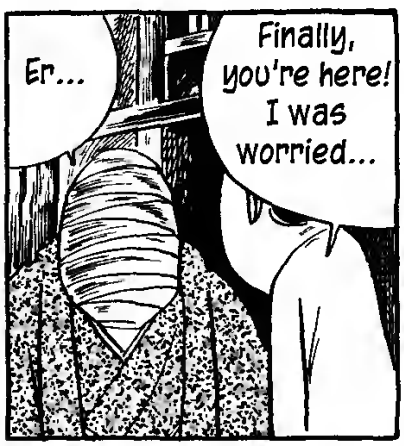
Pic

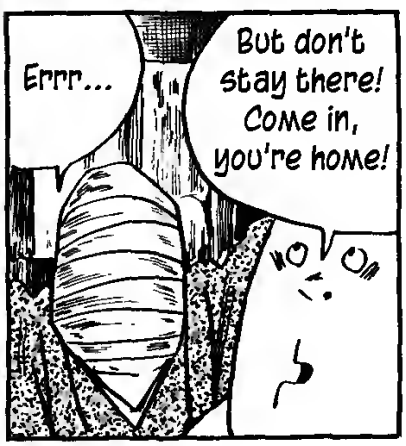

But... but... What's happening to me?
...before the director, feeling the pain, regained his senses. Surprised to feel his face covered in bandages, he wanted to express his astonishment, but no sound came from his mouth.

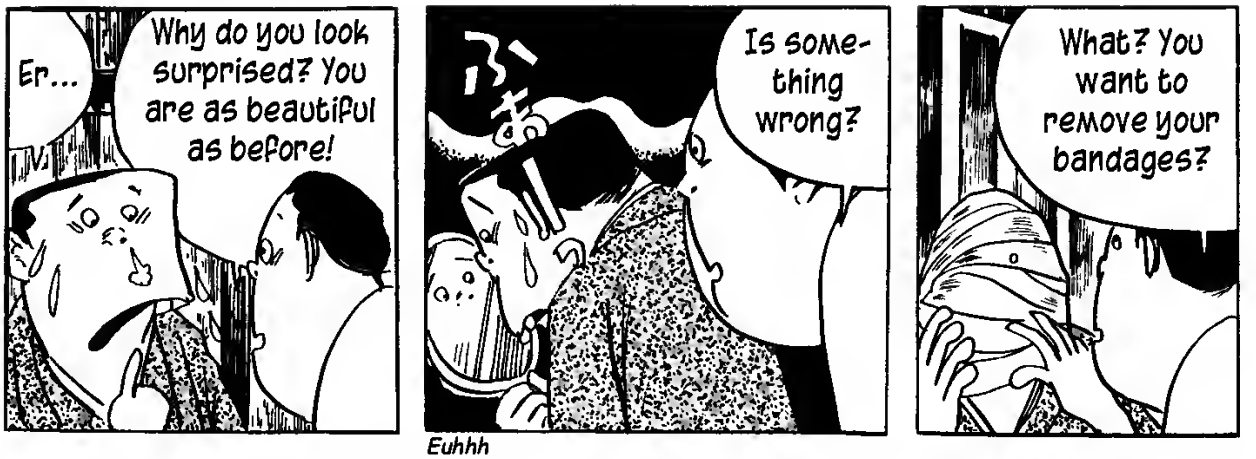
Visiting is prohibited.


His car was waiting outside. However, instead of taking him home, it led him to Yamada's modest apartment.

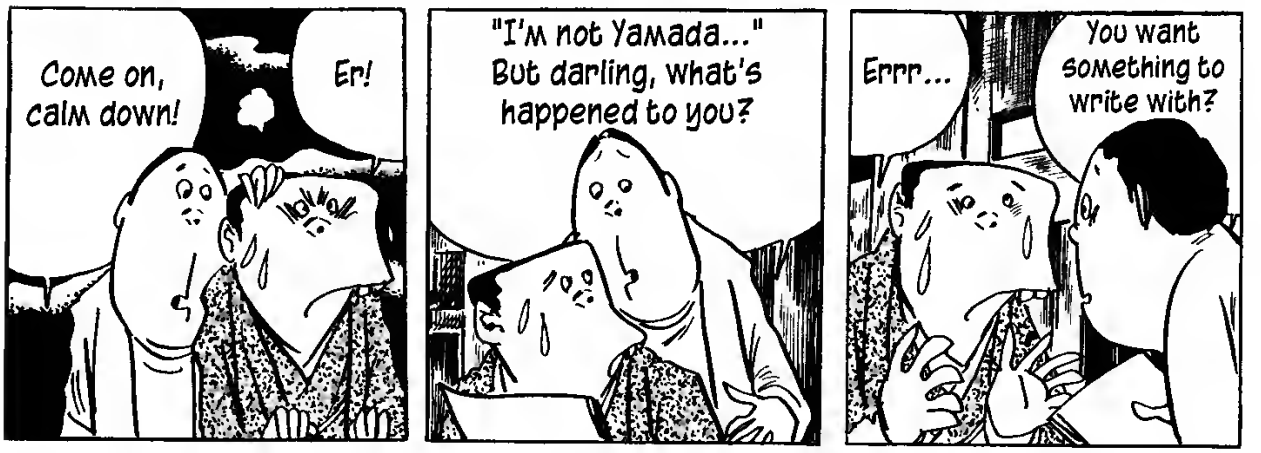
Your company called me to warn me that you were sick. I am worried! Your director paid the medical expenses. He's really a good man.


Er...
Finally, you're here! I was worried...

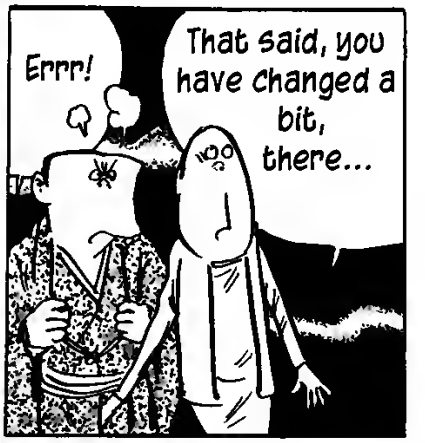

Errr...
But don't stay there! Come in, you're home!



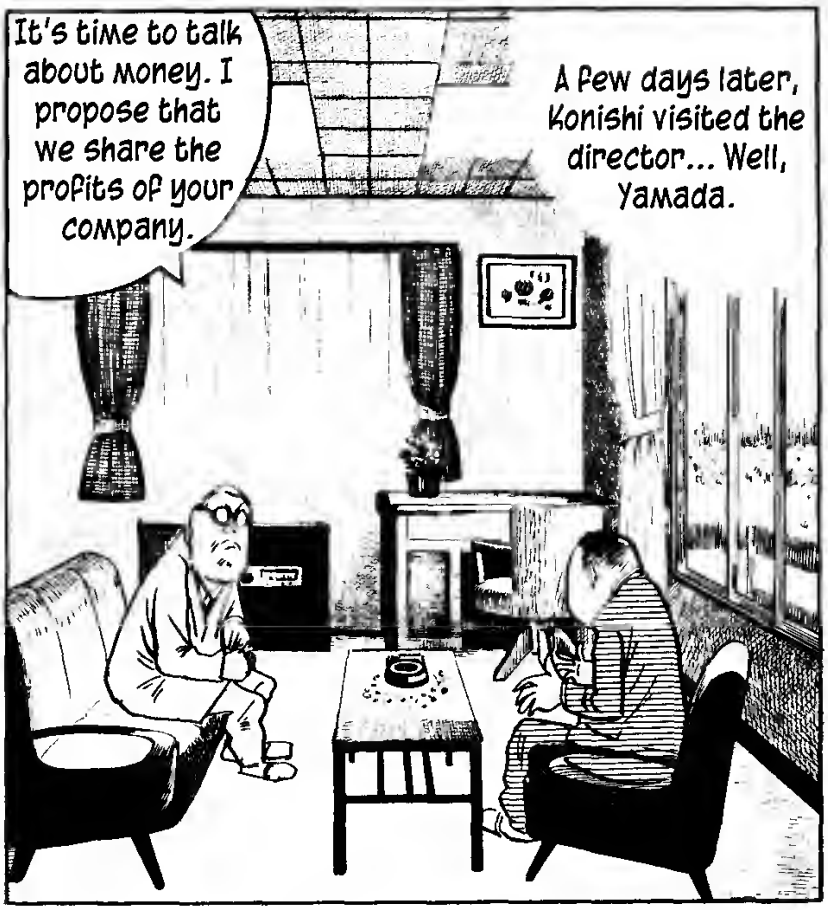
Euhhh

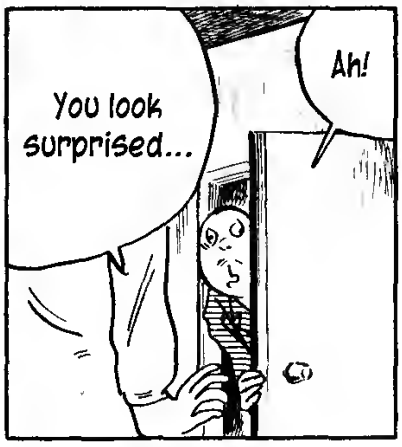


Darliiing!

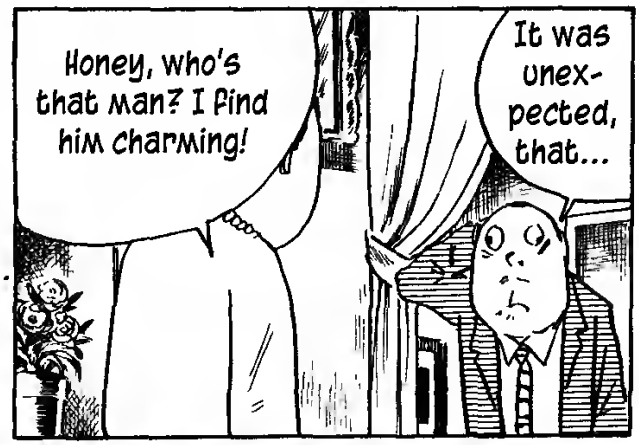


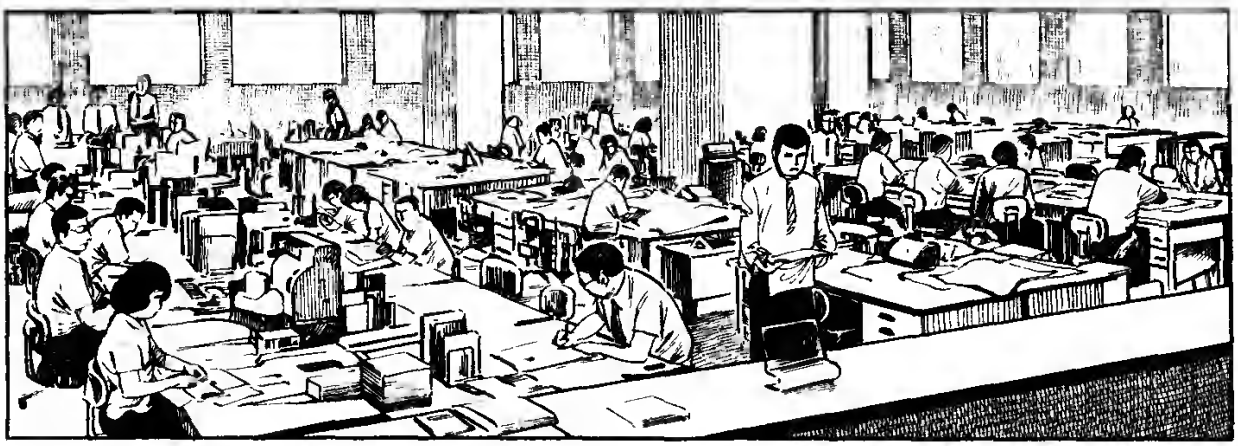
The couple filed a complaint, but without success: the police, in view of the incongruity of their story, took them for fools. As for Yamada, now installed in the director's place, he was delighted with his new life, with one exception...


It's time to talk about money. I propose that we share the profits of your company.
A few days later, Konishi visited the director... Well, Yamada.



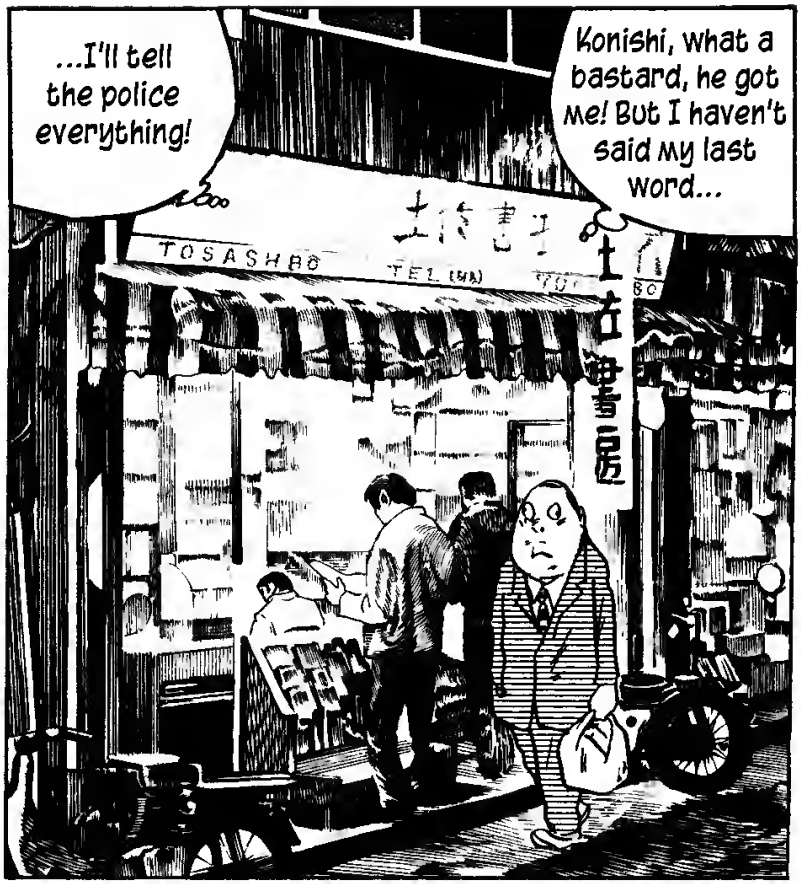
Fleeing his new wife, Yamada spent all his time at work...

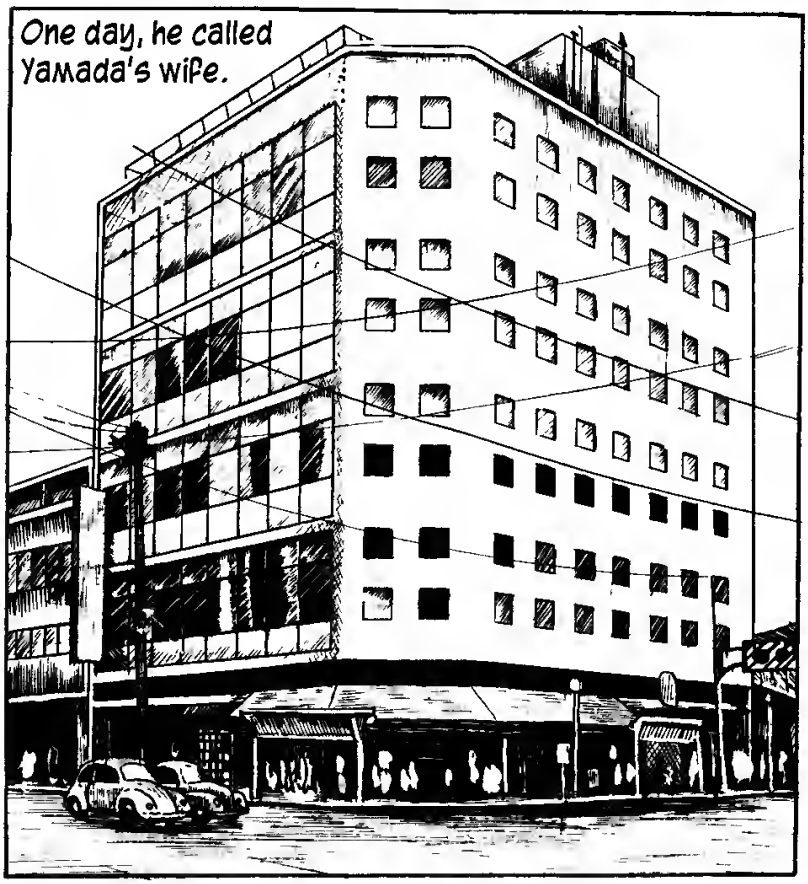




That evening...
This time it's decided! I'll leave my husband to marry you!
While Konishi was spending as much time as possible with her instead, so much that they became lovers.
With pleasure!
What? Divorce?
What?!
Me? You're dreaming! It's you who should pack your bags!
And when are you planning to leave?
This way, I'll get rid of both the bitch and Konishi!
I don't understand your surprise! Anyway, take your underpants, your hat and shoo!
Dang!
I'll remind you that this house is mine! You have no right to my property, and you've known that since the beginning!

Having already received a complaint from the director, the police finally carried out an investigation. The truth was soon exposed.





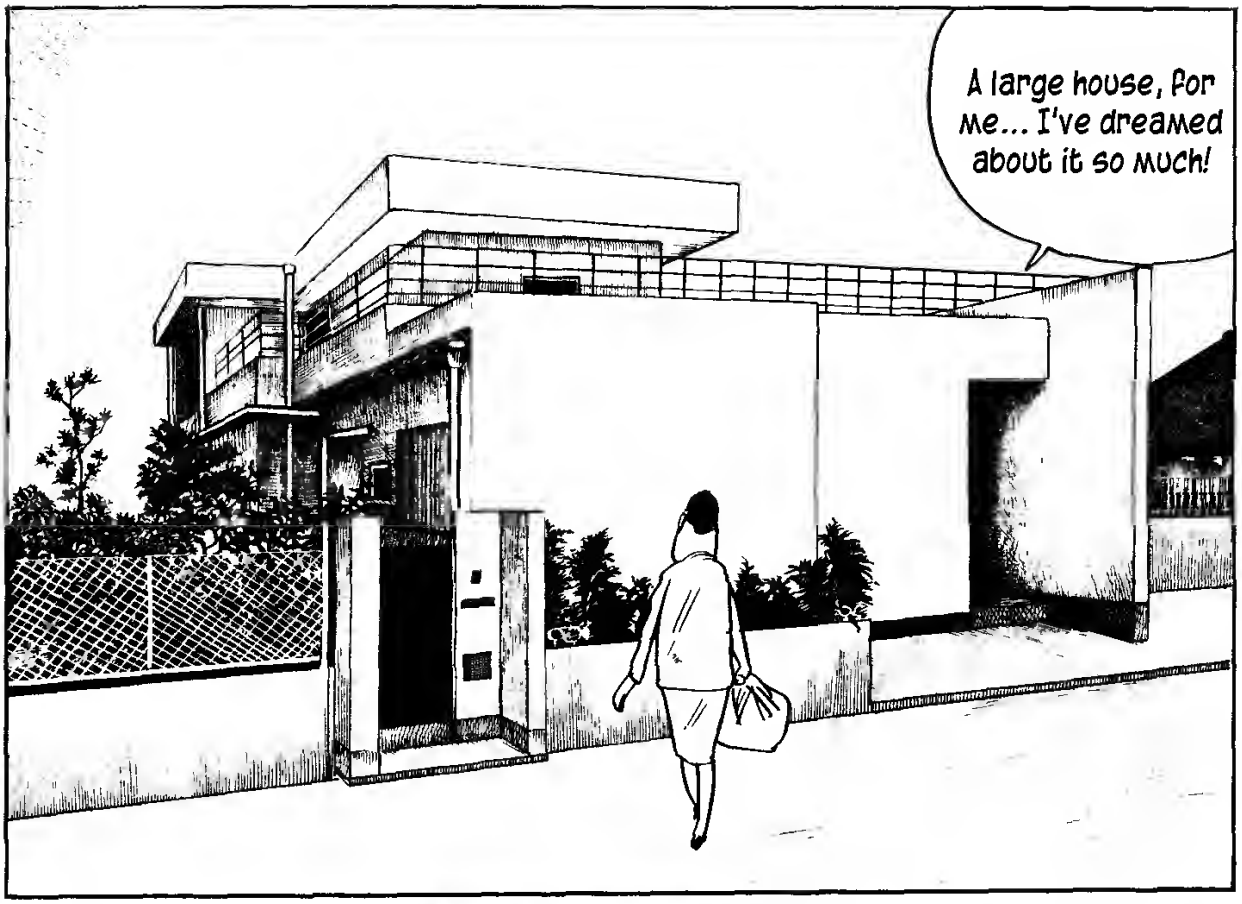
Thus, Konishi and Yamada were imprisoned. The director got his voice back thanks to a surgical intervention. However, he kept Yamada's facial features, a face transplant was too risky to attempt again. Then he divorced and received a large amount of money for damages, which he reinjected into his company.

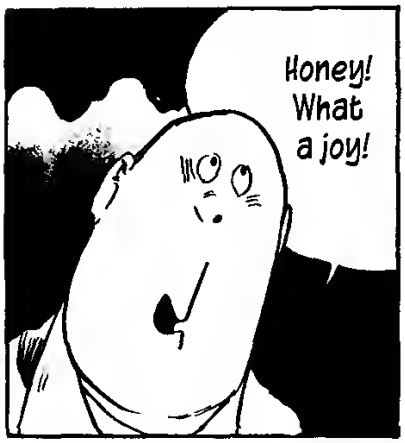
...I've thought about it too.
Yes, with pleasure! I must confess that...

Don't bring your stuff, you'll get everything you need here. A housemaid is waiting for you.

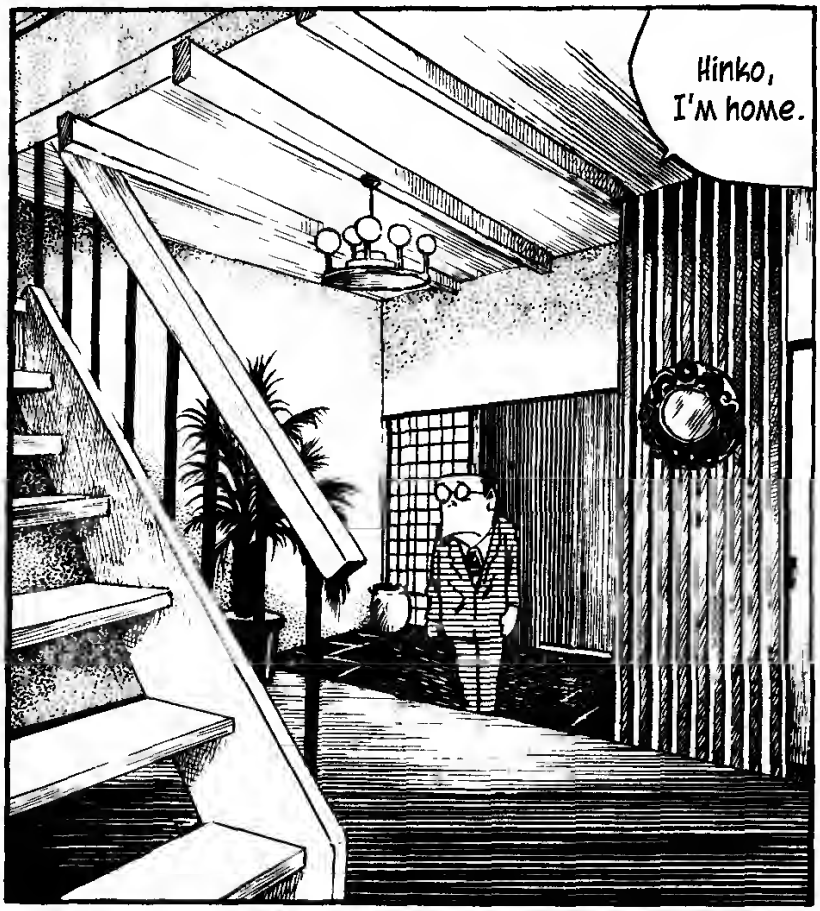
Will you marry me?

Finally, I can leave this dump!





The director, by marrying former Mrs. Yamada, lived very happily, but never knowing that this story took place just as his new wife had planned. Driven by a strong survival instinct, this woman, like all women perhaps, was actually a formidable animalus economicus!



A Monstrous Crowd

Hanamori!
パーマ
27
27
How's it going? You seem out of sorts, lately.
Ah! Nagai!
2
...your manga has grown very gloomy.
I'm telling you this because...

Well... I... er...
Did something happen to you?
You think? Well, if you insist. But don't repeat what I tell you to anyone!
Go on, tell me. Maybe I can help you?
That's the least you could say...
Trouble with your wife?
Actually, I... let's say, marital problems.
Is it that serious?
What?!
I don't know how to explain... I feel that... she's not human.

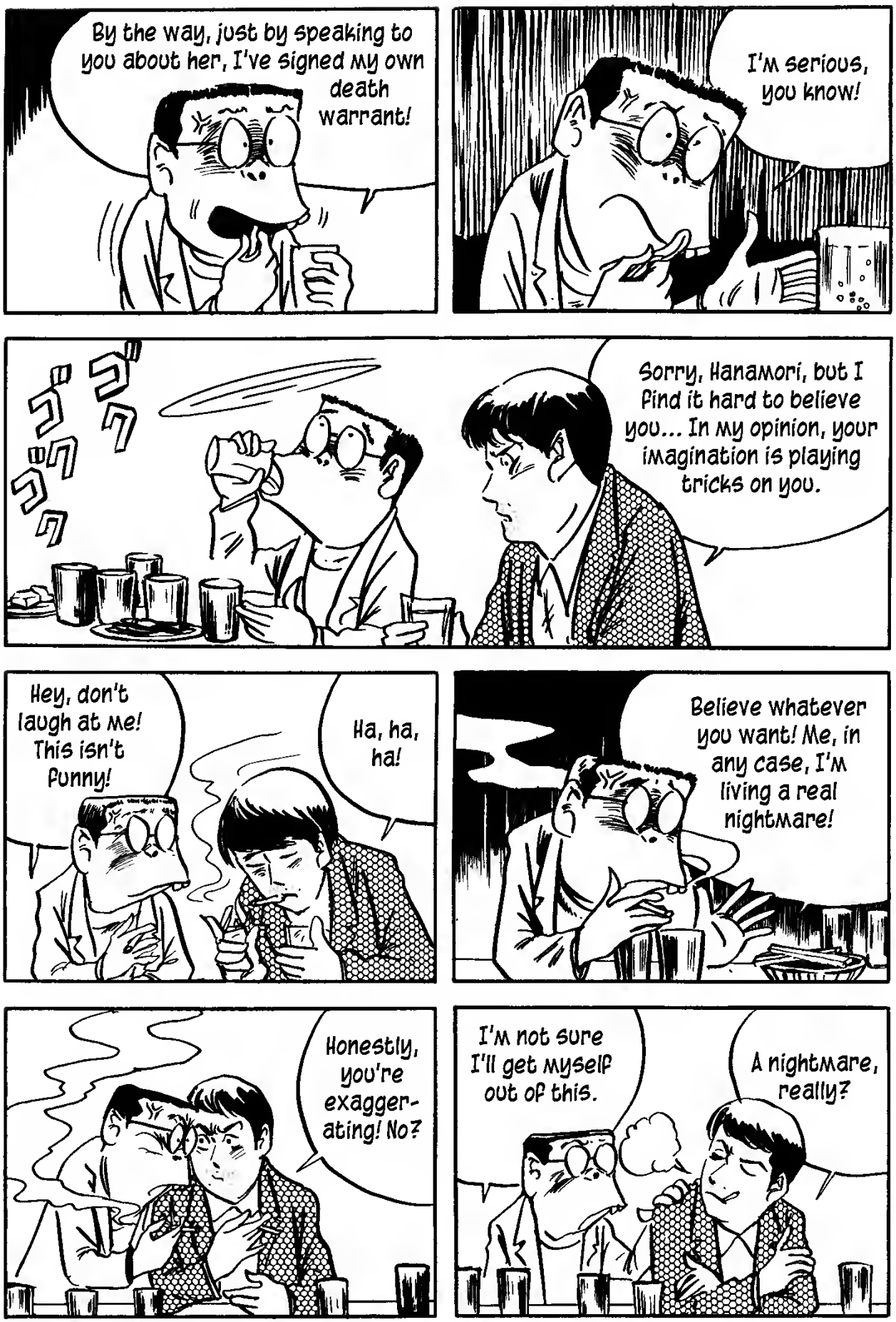
No, not really! On the contrary, she's very pretty and has a stunning body! Her skin is soft and fine and...
Does she have a fox tail?!
Actually, she pretends to be human.
However, I feel terribly oppressed... If you knew how worried I get!
And you're afraid of a pretty woman? Sorry, but I don't see where the problem is!
二乘
文房具
カメヤ
And are you the only one feeling this way? Your wife, she may be very happy with you!

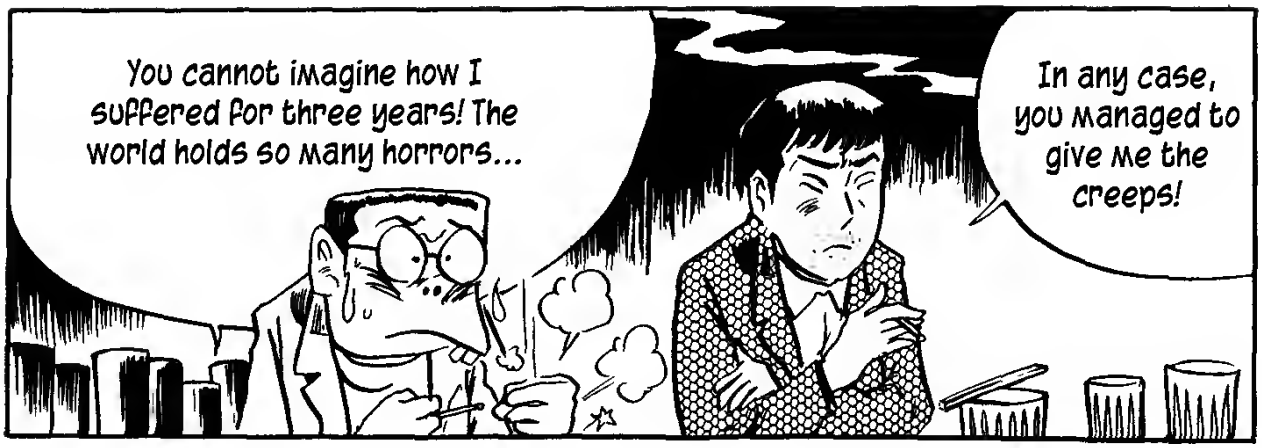
Let me treat you. It will do you good to relax a bit.
How's about a drink?
And why is that?
To relax, me? I don't think I'd be able to...
Well, don't worry! We'll just have a few drinks, that's it!
It's been several days since I last went home. So if my wife found me here...
So drink something!
Your friend is right!

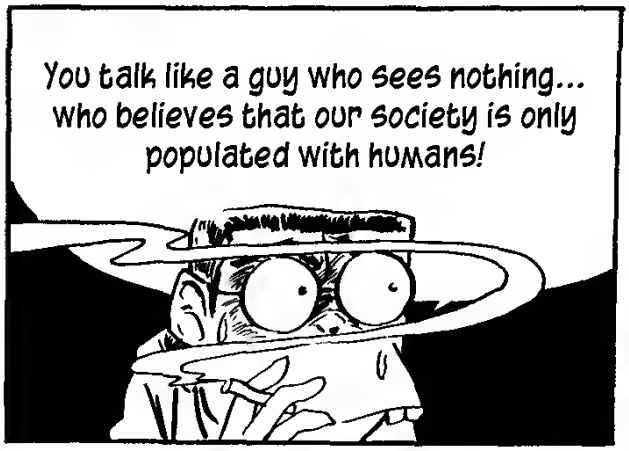
Only one glass, then.
Mmm! Excellent, this sake!
ゴクゴクゴク
ゴクゴクゴク
Well...
Do you want some more?
ウィーッ
ゴクリ

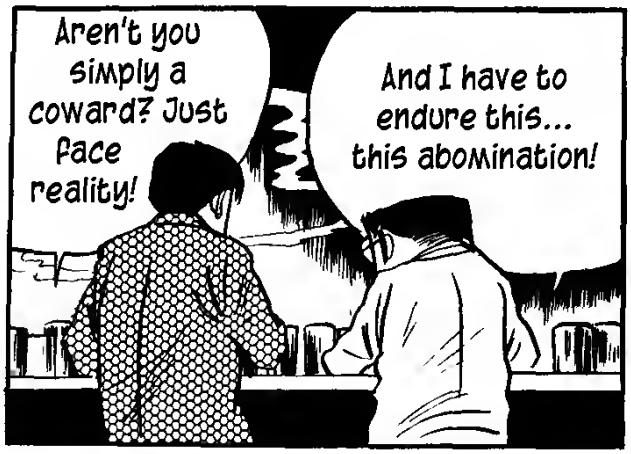
Hips

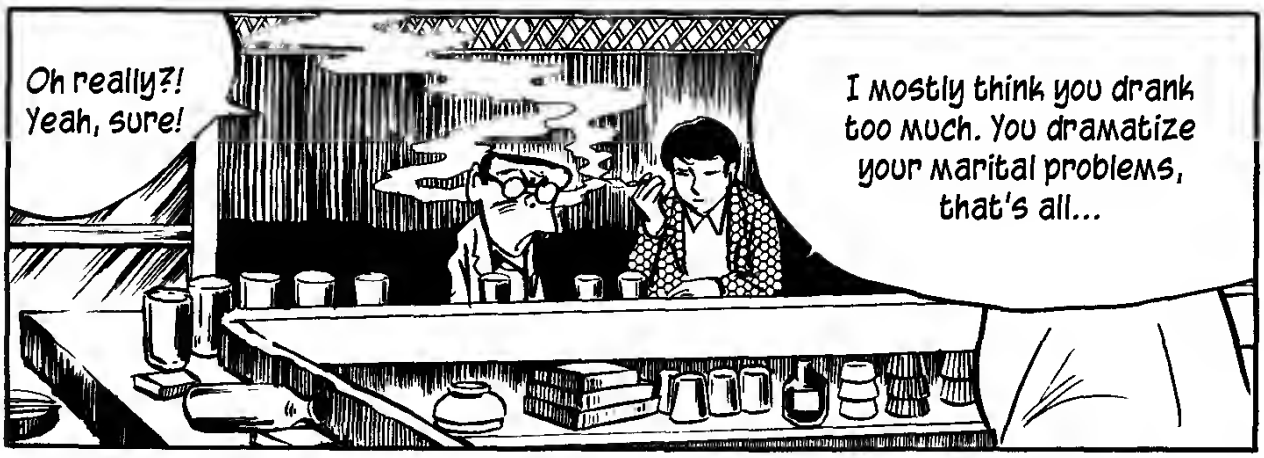
Not all women are women... There are monsters who disguise themselves as human!
How so?
Nagai, lemme give you some advice... Watch out for women!
Around us, everywhere ...
Mine for example... She's a monster!
Glou glou glou
It's full of creatures whose true faces we don't know!
Right now, I'm wondering how to free myself from this monster... but apart from dying, I have no idea...
Hips


By the way, just by speaking to you about her, I've signed my own death warrant!
I'm serious, you know!
ゴク ゴクゴク
Sorry, Hanamori, but I find it hard to believe you... In my opinion, your imagination is playing tricks on you.
Hey, don't laugh at me! This isn't funny!
Ha, ha, ha!
Believe whatever you want! Me, in any case, I'm living a real nightmare!
Honestly, you're exaggerating! No?
I'm not sure I'll get myself out of this.
A nightmare, really?

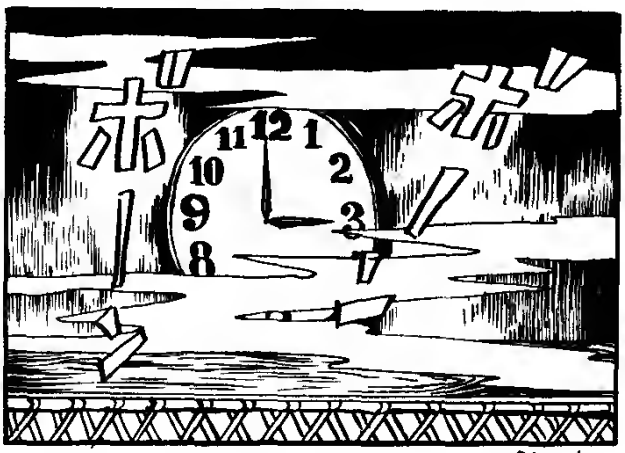

You cannot imagine how I suffered for three years! The world holds so many horrors...
In any case, you managed to give me the creeps!


You talk like a guy who sees nothing... who believes that our society is only populated with humans!


Aren't you simply a coward? Just face reality!
And I have to endure this... this abomination!


Oh really?! Yeah, sure!
I mostly think you drank too much. You dramatize your marital problems, that's all...

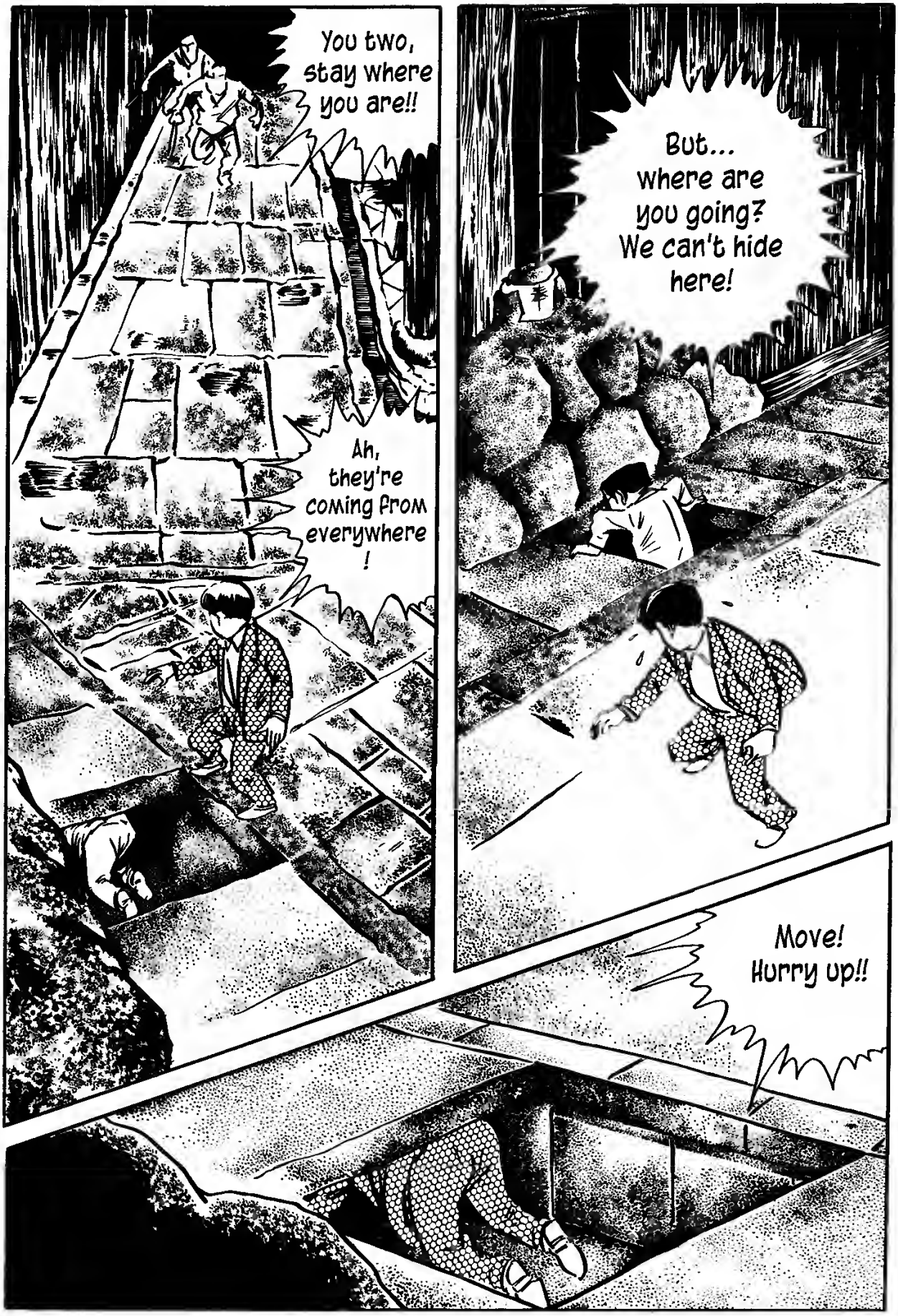
We're closing!

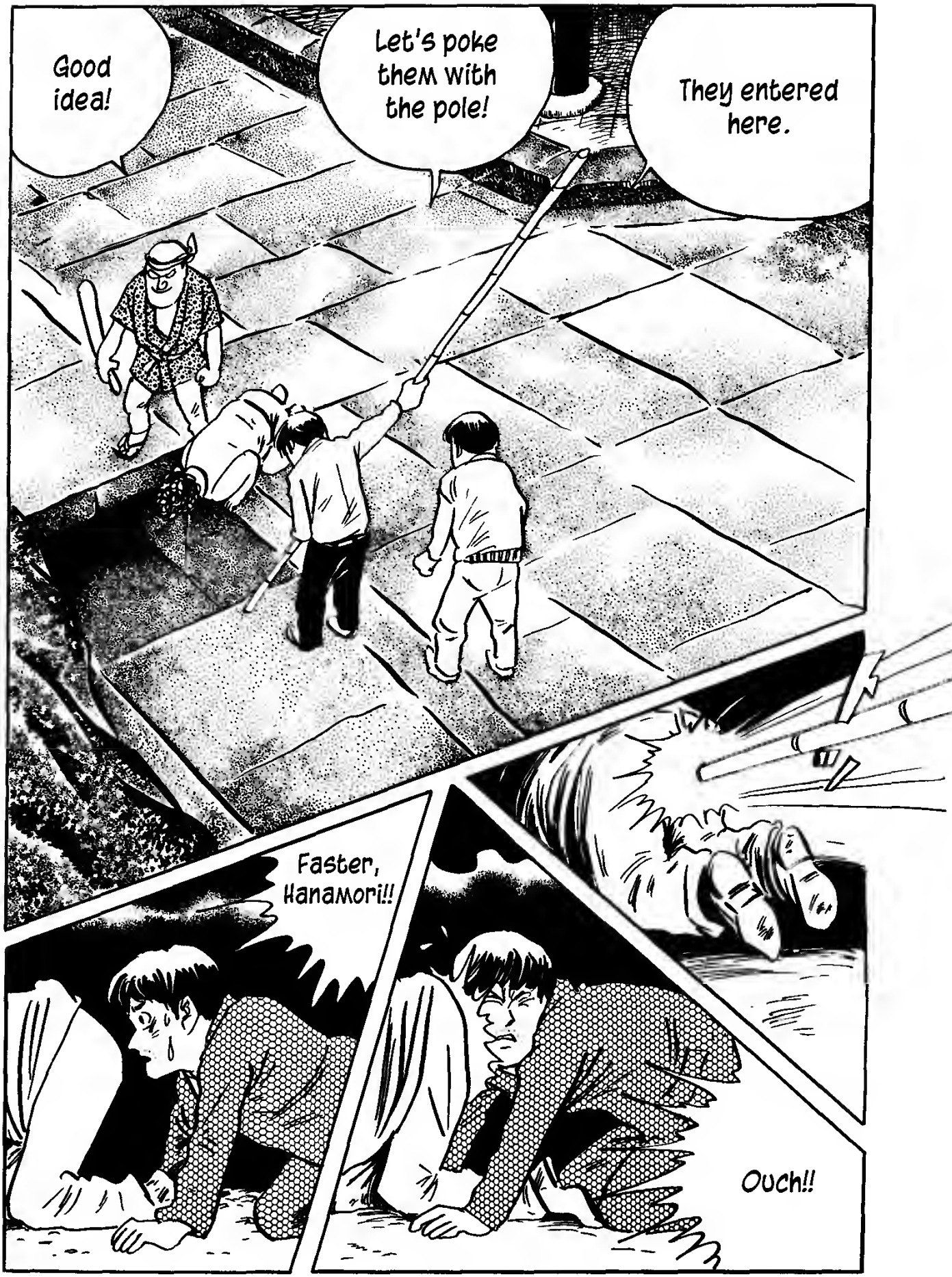

12
1
2
3
8
9
10
11

Ding dong

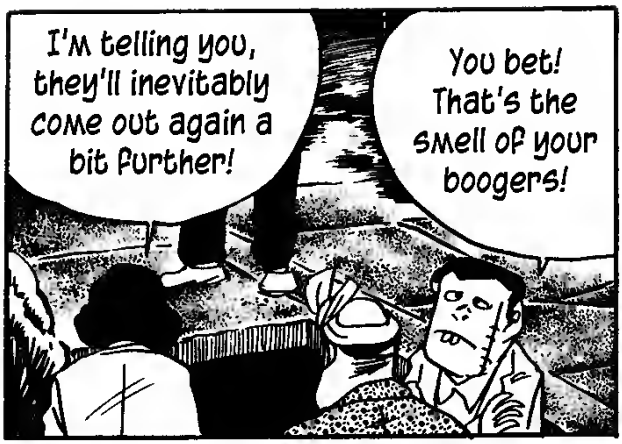
...enough to pay?!
You have enough...
Already 3 a.m.?!
I don't have any money on me!
ジロリ
Ziup
No!! So what do we do?!
ガタガタ
Brrr brrr
Sorry, even though I wanted to treat you... What about you? Do you have any?
Don't panic. We will find a solution.
ガタガタ
Brrr brrr
貸売りゼッタイお断り
店主
The house does not give credit. The boss

Calm down!
ガタガタ
Brrr brrr
Hey! Where are you going like that?! Come back!!
Help!!
禍
酒
ウィスキー
焼とり
一福
焼とん
ホルモ
Dirty thieves!!
Faster, they'll catch us!
宗
正宗
大象酒場


You two, stay where you are!!
Ah, they're coming from everywhere!
But... where are you going? We can't hide here!
Move! Hurry up!!


Good idea!
Let's poke them with the pole!
They entered here.
Faster, Hanamori!!
Ouch!!

Well, you shouldn't have stayed that close to me...
コテン
Fsss
Part
I would say that it leads to the sewers.
No. You know where this canal leads to?
What? You're not touching them anymore now?
Hey! Look at this!
Then, at the next manhole, they will...
Moron! That may have been the case in the past, but today this is nothing more than the Tokyo sewers!
This thing, it indicates an entry... One of the seven secret tunnels of Edo Castle!


I'm telling you, they'll inevitably come out again a bit further!
You bet! That's the smell of your boogers!

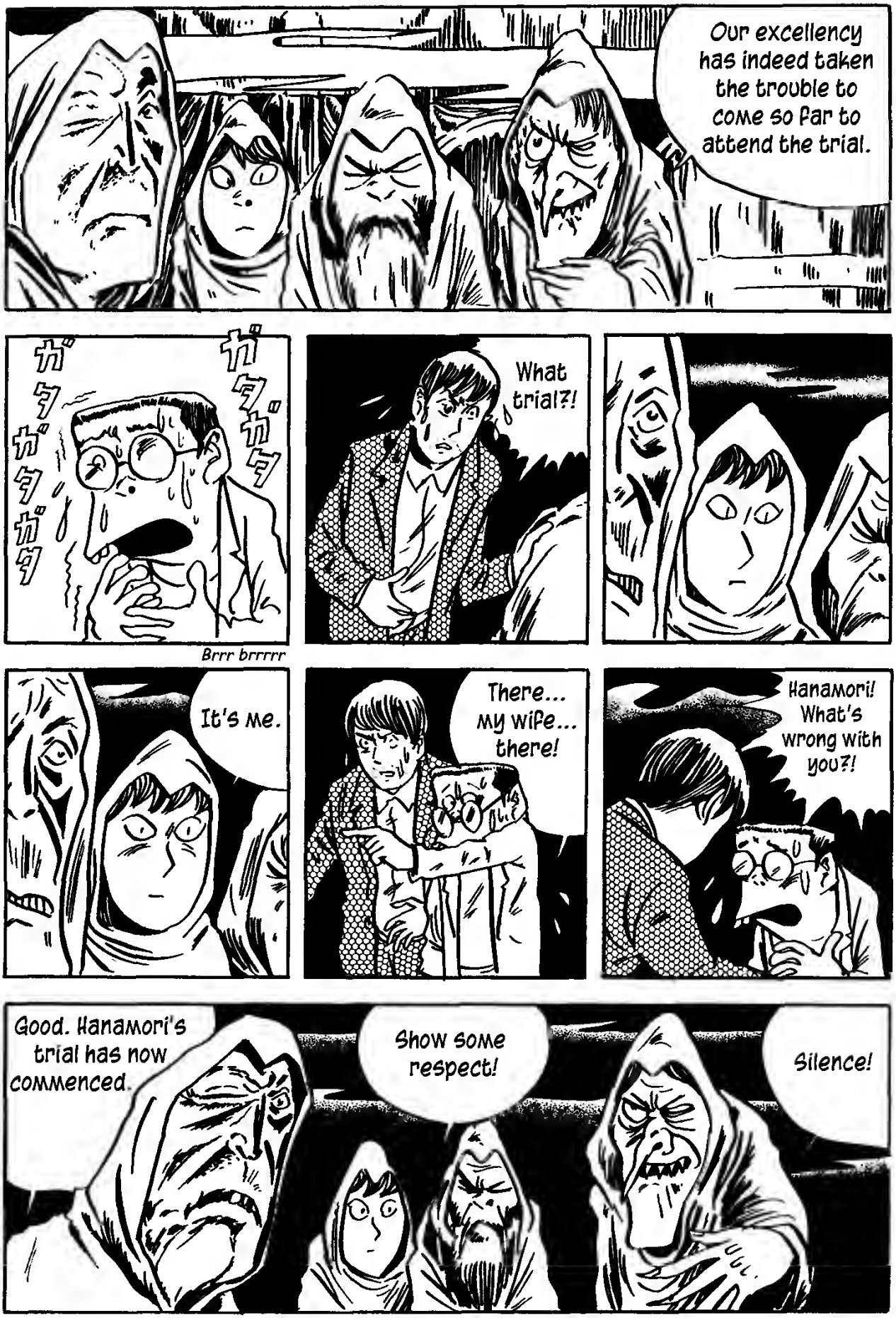
Yeah, it stinks of gas...
It smells weird, right?

Yet both men were slow to resurface... What happened there in the sewer?

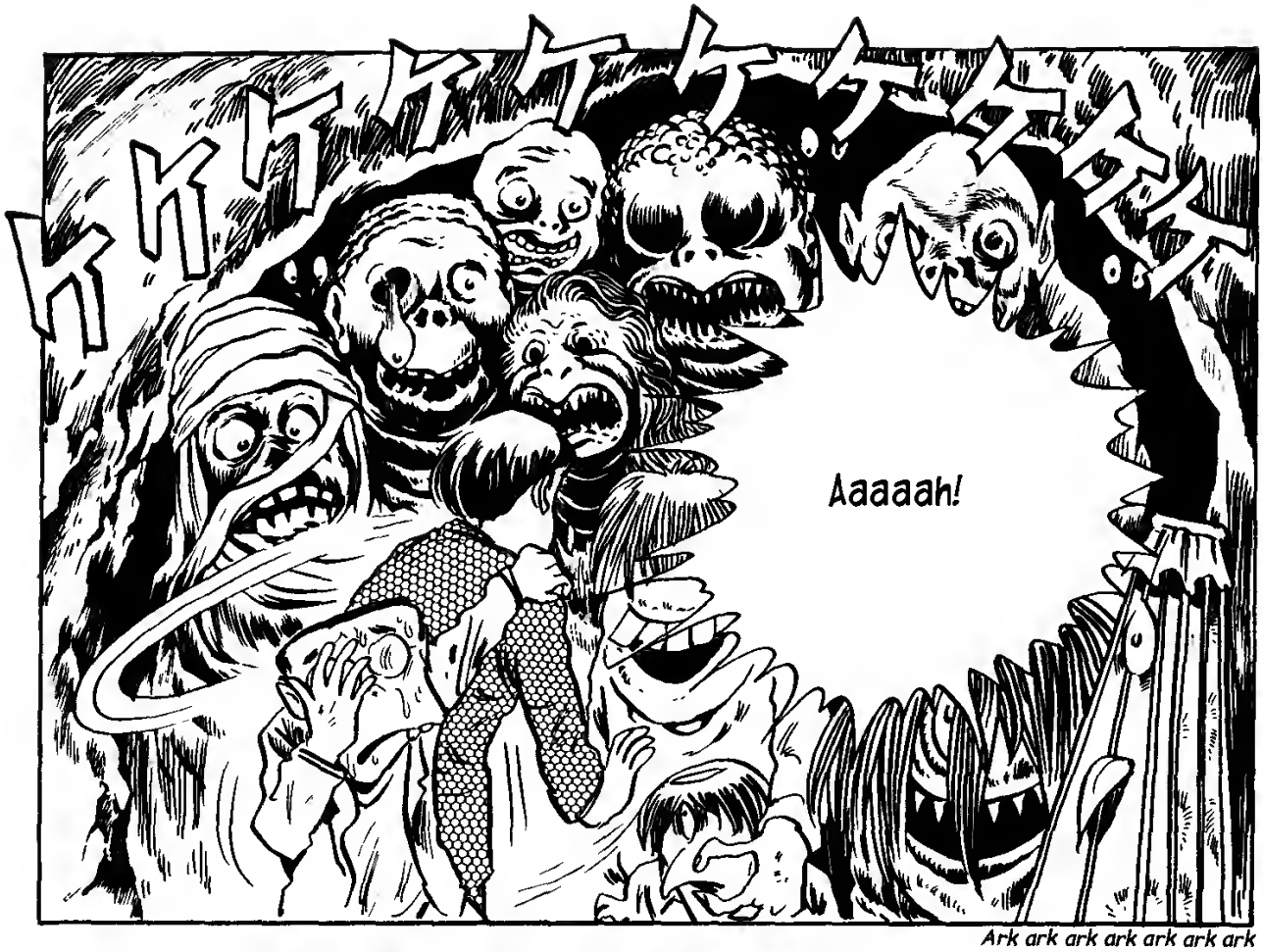
And we cannot go back...
This is unbelievable! Still no exit!
Hmm... Well, we can only move forward now.
This is why I didn't want to go in here!
Did you notice? The water level is rising quite...

Perhaps it will lead us to the exit?
There, a hole!
Yes, this must be a way out.
Nagai, I see some light, a little further on.
Ah... another tunnel.
?

?
So... what now?
That's true. Let's go ask them where the exit is.
Wait! We're not going to spend our lives in the sewers?!
Let's just ignore them!
Sorry? Have we met?
Finally, here you are... We have been waiting for your arrival.
Er... Excuse us for bothering you, but... do you know how we can return to the surface from here?
Insolent! We do not speak so familiarly before our lord!


Our excellency has indeed taken the trouble to come so far to attend the trial.
ガタガタ
ガタガタガタ
What trial?!
Brrr brrrrr
It's me.
There... My wife... there!
Hanamori! What's wrong with you?!
Good. Hanamori's trial has now commenced.
Show some respect!
Silence!

But by what right are you judging him?
カチ
カチ
カチ
Clac clac clac
Know that our laws are formal: the humiliation of one of us affects our entire clan! The affront reaches us all!
Who are you, you who dare protest against our laws? A stranger, no doubt!
If that's the case...
These creatures ... They're probably my wife's family. You see, they aren't human!
I beg you, Nagai! Stay out of this story, or you'll die!
Ah!
Why not run away? We just have to turn back!

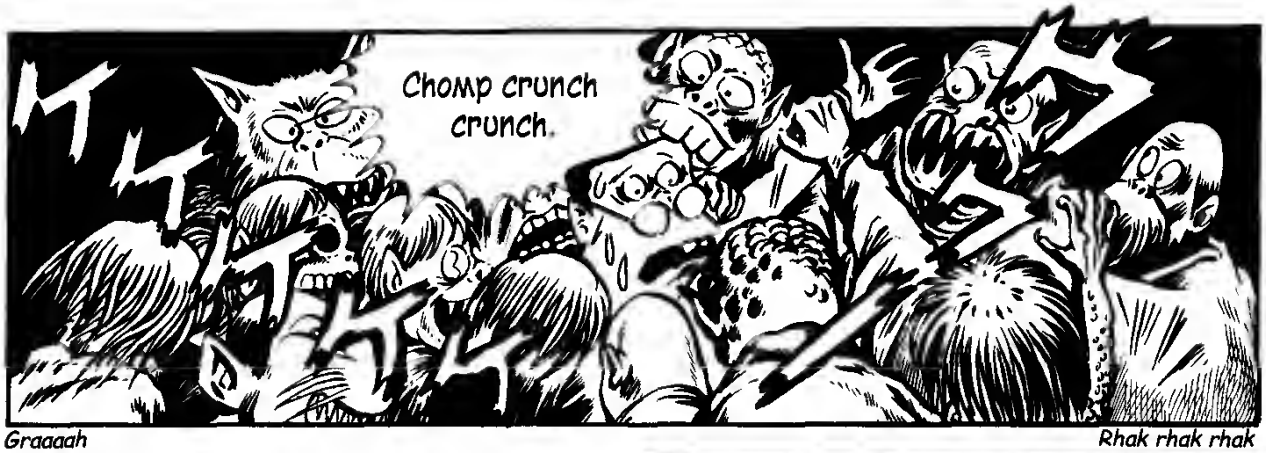

Aaaaah!
Ark ark ark ark ark ark ark

Ouch!
Sit!

That's wrong! I just talked about her to...

Hanamori, by revealing our secret, you dared to break the promise made with this woman.

The sentence !
カチ カチ カチ
You're lying! You swore to me not to tell anyone!
Clac clac clac
Death!
Rhaaaaah
Hanamori! Nooo!!

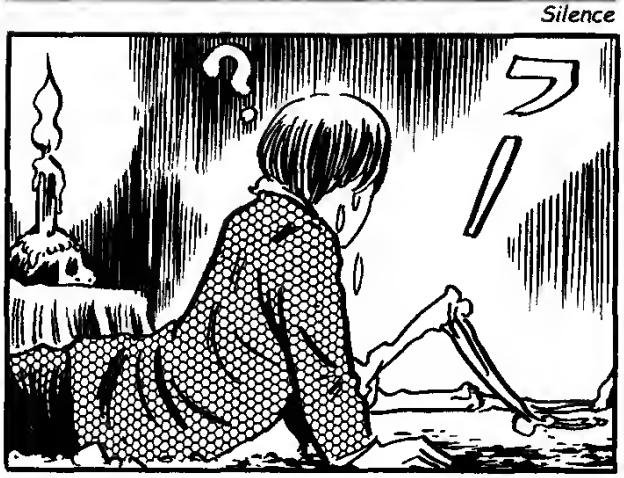


Graaaah

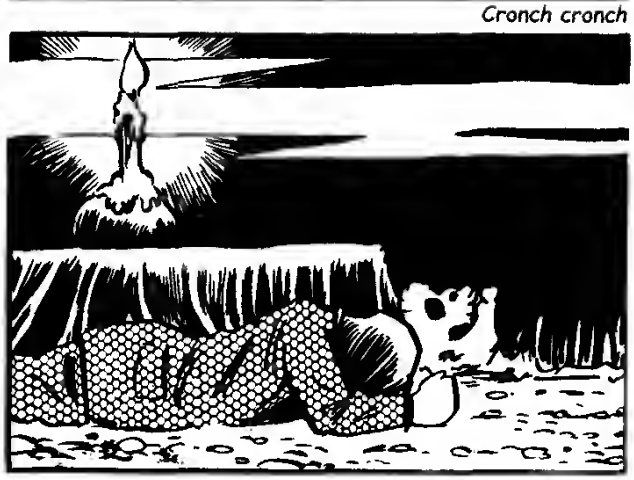
Rhak rhak rhak

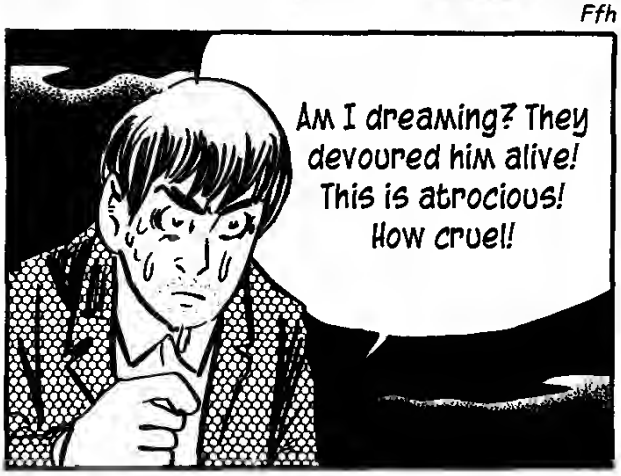
Silence

Cronch cronch

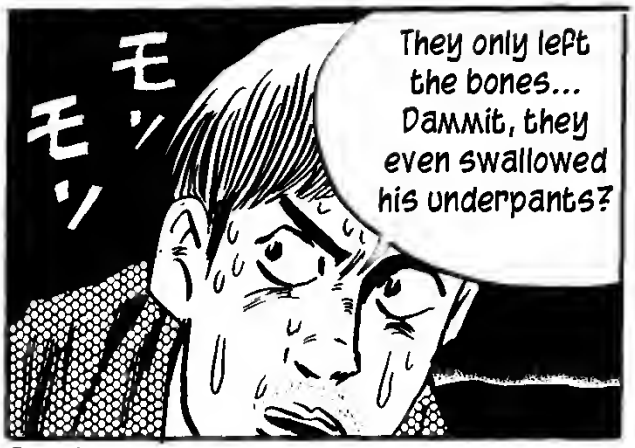


Ffh

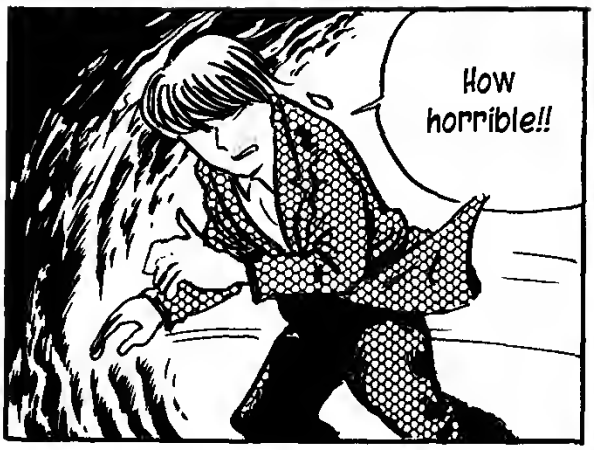


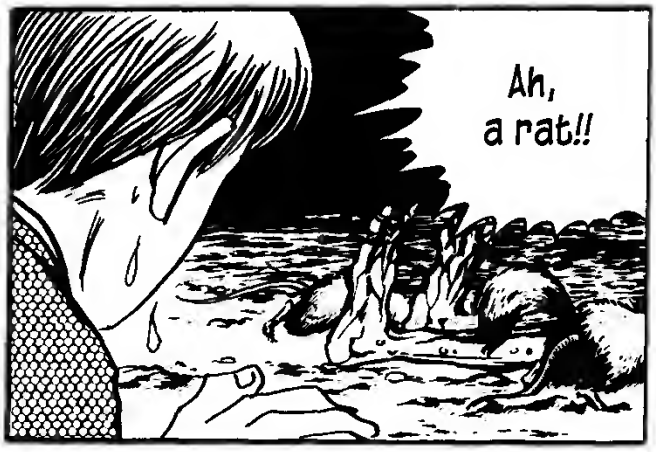


Croc croc croc

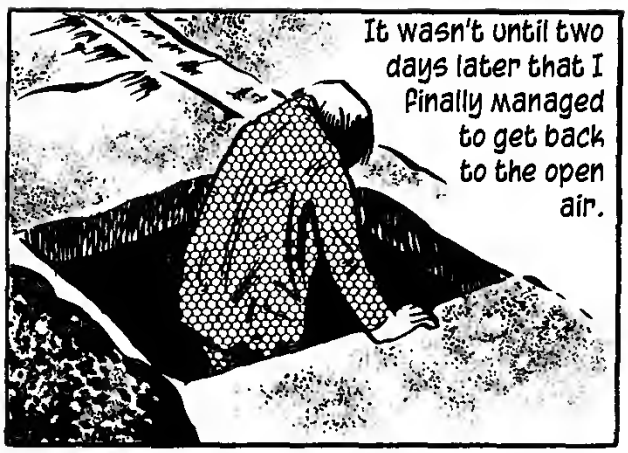


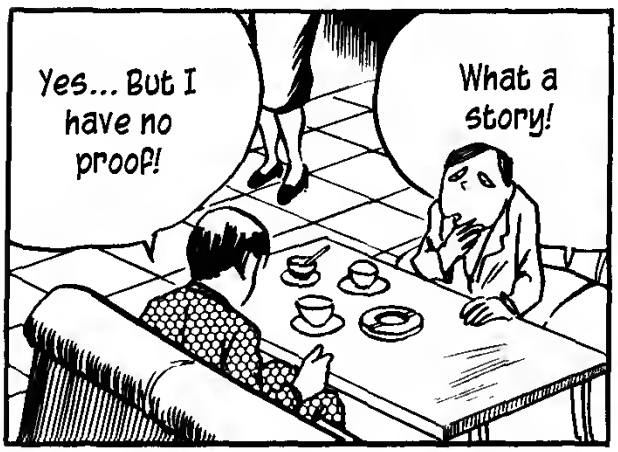
Sss sst

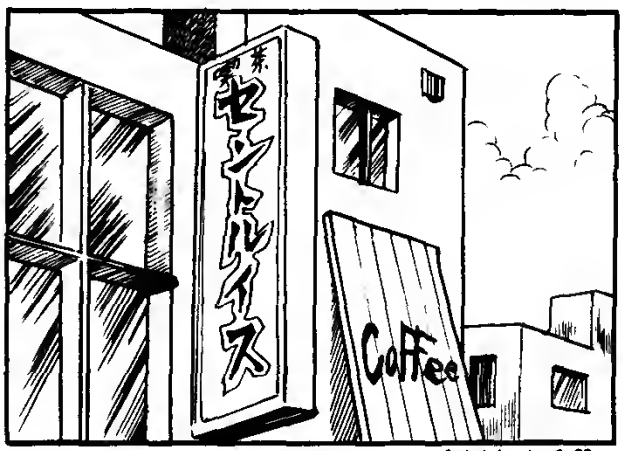




The next day I returned to the scene accompanied by police, to tell them where Hanamori's body was lying. But I never managed to find the mysterious tunnel which led us to the fateful place. Therefore, the police thought of me as crazy and dismissed the case.





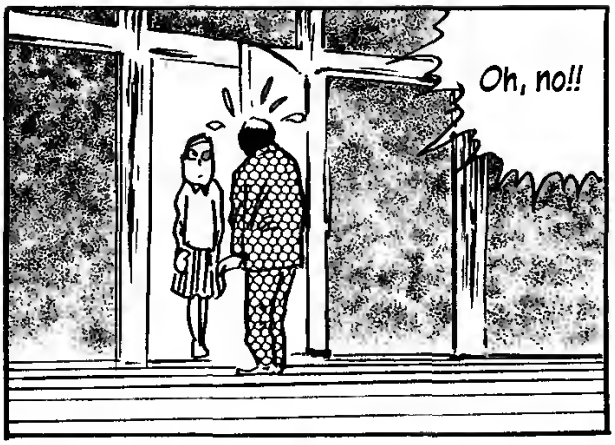


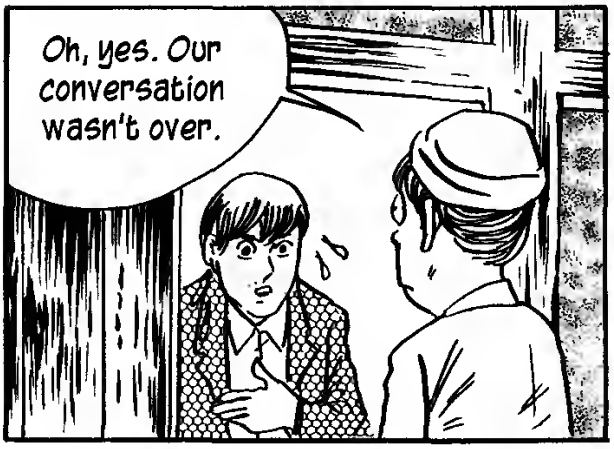
Saint Louis Coffee

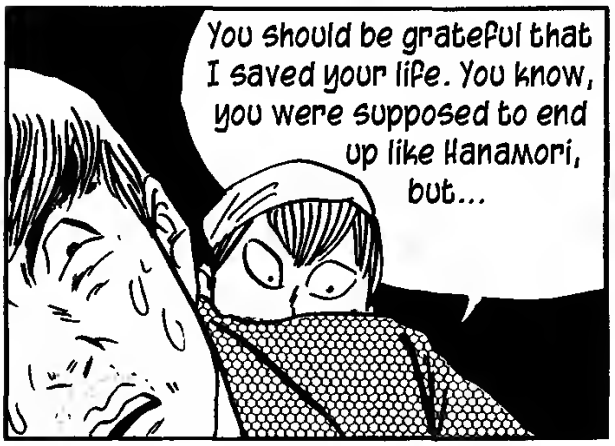
I am delighted to run into you again.
Have mercy, I... I said nothing!
Proof? But about what?
?
I absolutely cannot do anything!
Nagai? What's wrong?
ワナワナワナ
...to visit you.
Anyway, I was planning to come to you...
Brrr
ざわ
You're white as a sheet!
カタカタ
Aaaah !
Brrr brrr
Wait!
ゴゴゴ
Ffh !
Tadam dam

Why run? It's useless.
Hey there!
劇画時代
There are many of us, our kind, watching you...
For pity's sake! Help!
We need to talk. This is important!
Aaah!
I'M getting on with you!
新潟
東京

Stadam dam





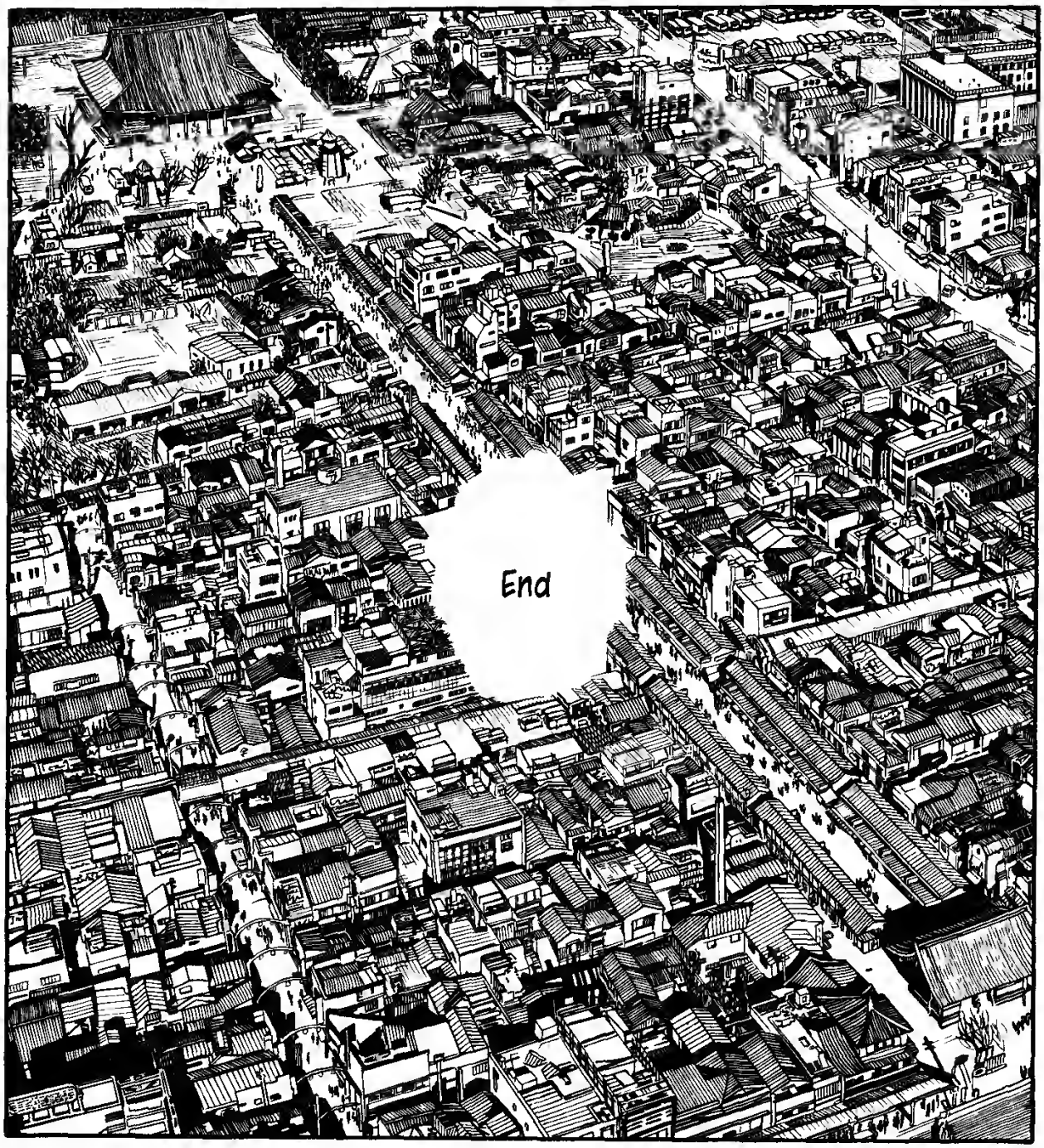


Crac crac

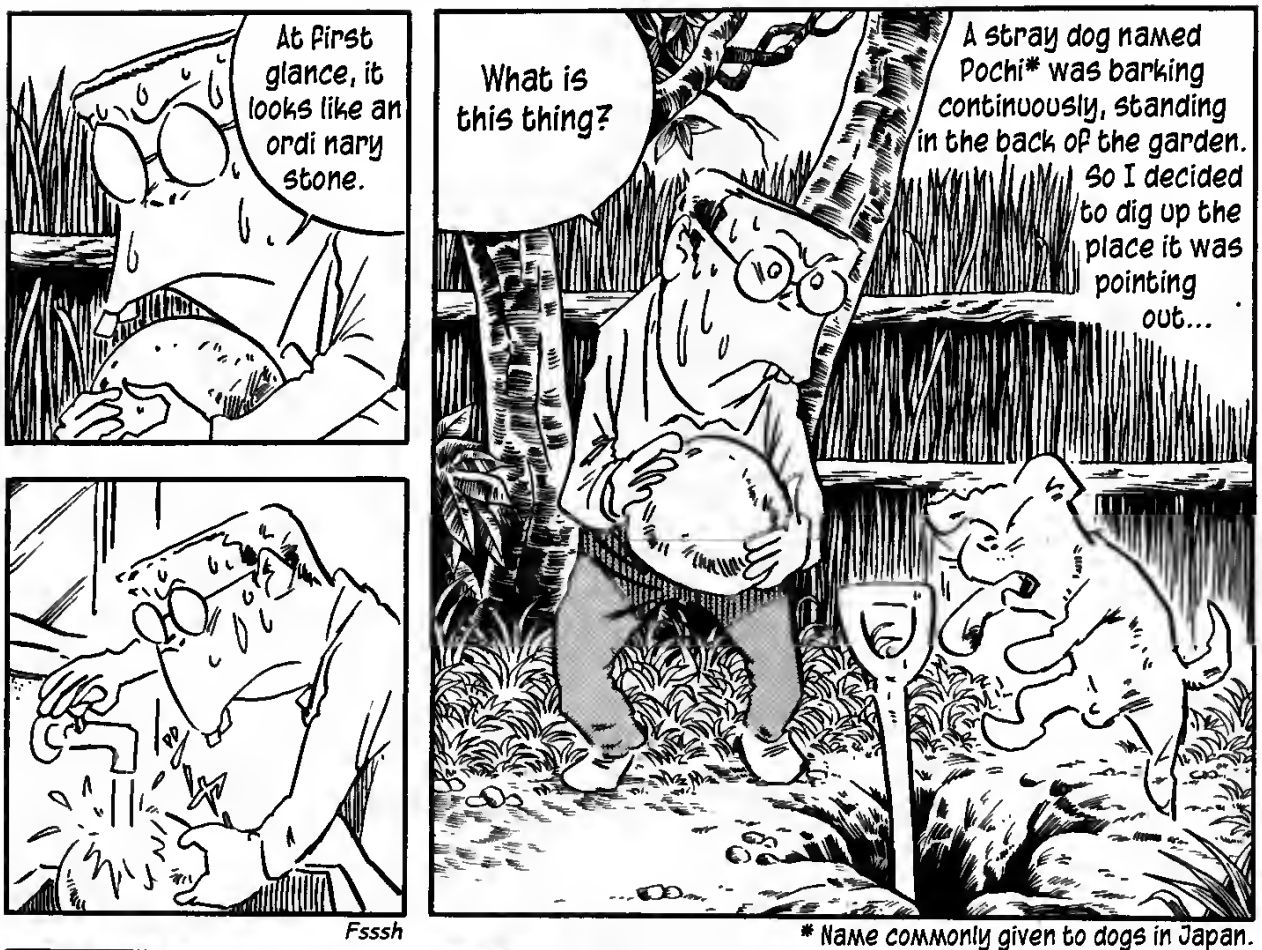
Let's fix a wedding date right now.
What? But...
I preferred to spare you. Yep, I have plans for the both of us! I want you to be my new husband.
Three months later...
Come on... remember that poor Hanamori...
エエ
What?!
It's Nagai.
... for some time now, your manga has been lacking life. It makes me think about what Hanamori was drawing before disappearing.
Hmm... I find that...
Here's the last chapter.

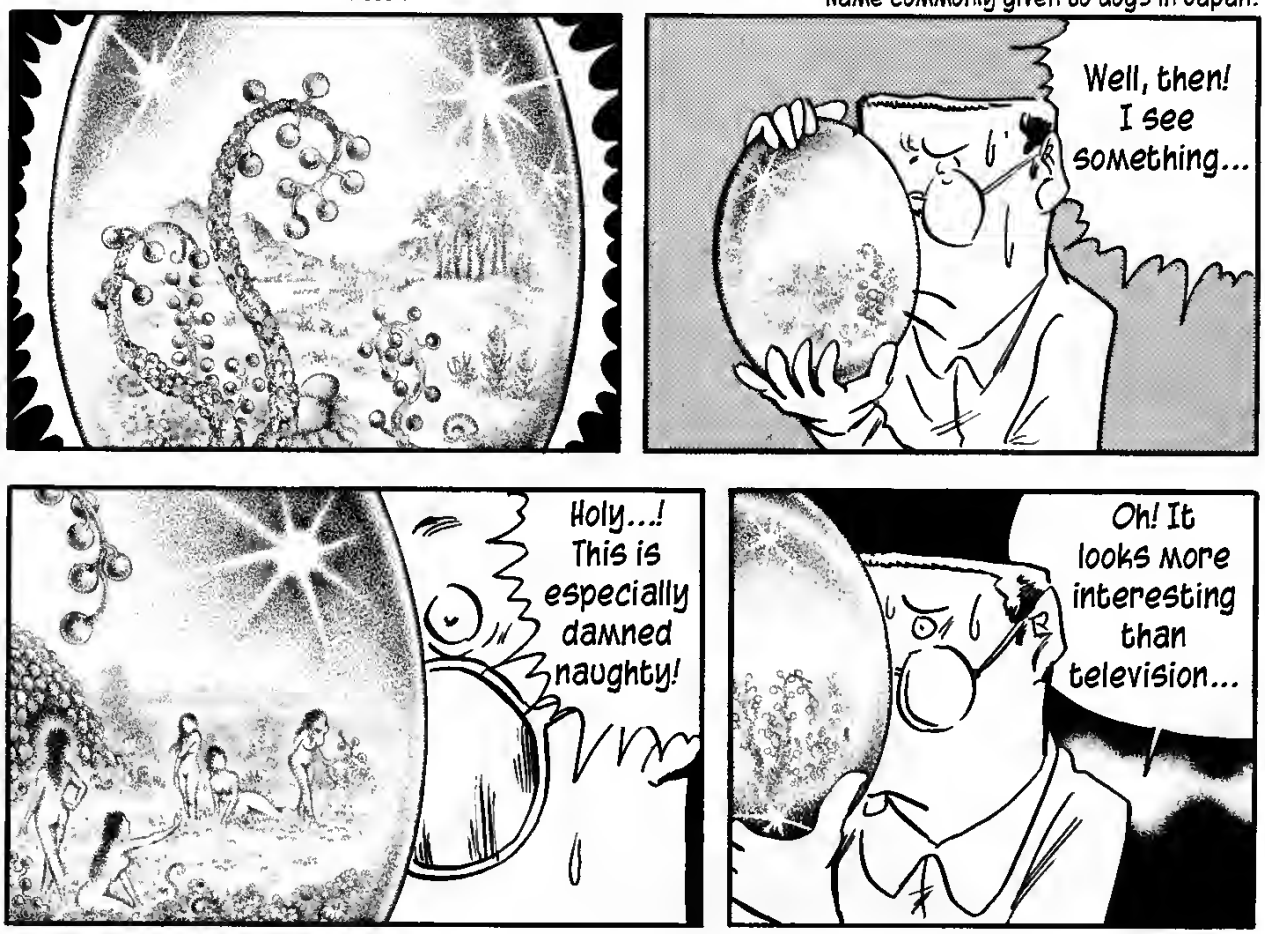
I assure you that all is well.
Still, you're not looking well...
No.
Are you in trouble?
No, I must not speak of her to anyone!
...
This crowd...
Or I might die, like Hanamori.
I had always believed it was made up of humans...

Yet, monsters lurk everywhere, nonchalantly mingling among us. Men and women whose true faces are unknown. Like my wife... A creature that survives by marrying mortals and feels no remorse when it's time for a change.

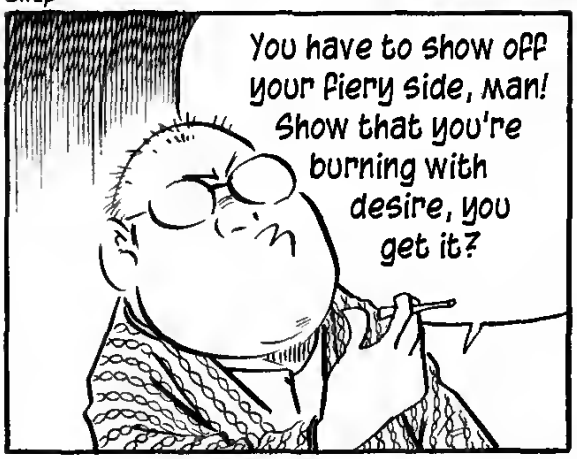


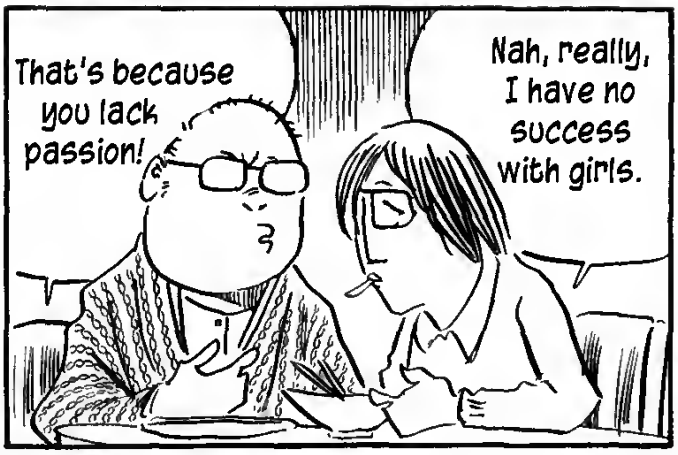
The Crystal Ball

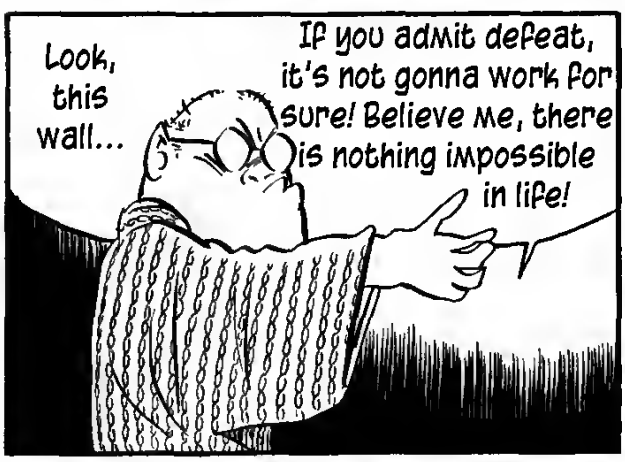

At first glance, it looks like an ordi nary stone.
What is this thing?
A stray dog named Pochi* was barking continuously, standing in the back of the garden. So I decided to dig up the place it was pointing out...
Fsssh
* Name commonly given to dogs in Japan.

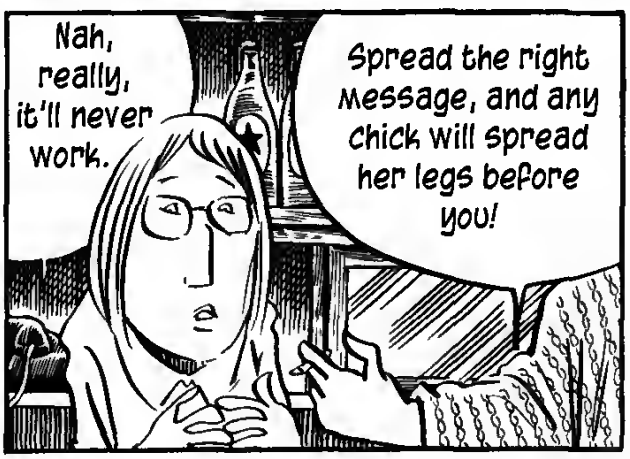

Well, then! I see something...
Holy...! This is especially damned naughty!
Oh! It looks more interesting than television...

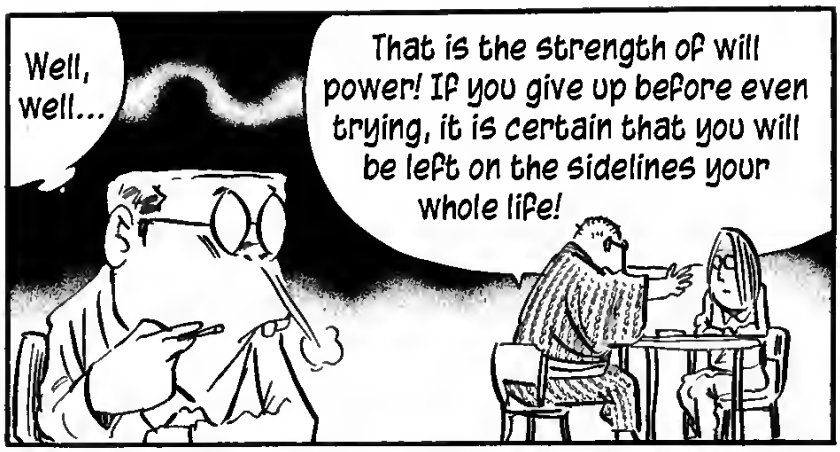
Spaghetti bolognese, please.
Well, I made a nice discovery.
Slurp

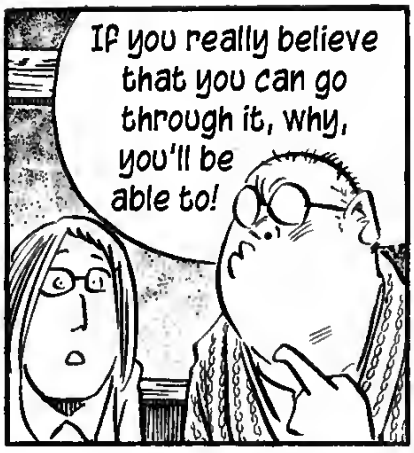

You have to show off your fiery side, man! Show that you're burning with desire, you get it?

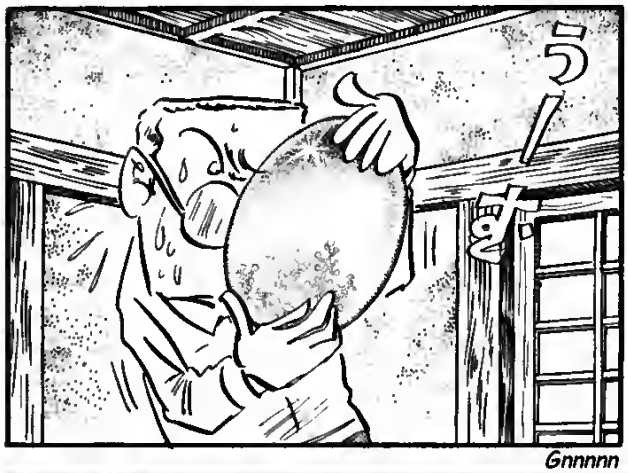

That's because you lack passion!
Nah, really, I have no success with girls.


Look, this wall...
If you admit defeat, it's not gonna work for sure! Believe me, there is nothing impossible in life!


Nah, really, it'll never work.
Spread the right message, and any chick will spread her legs before you!


Well, well...
That is the strength of will power! If you give up before even trying, it is certain that you will be left on the sidelines your whole life!



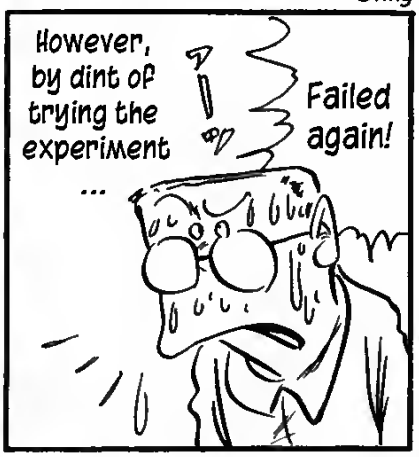


Gnnnnn

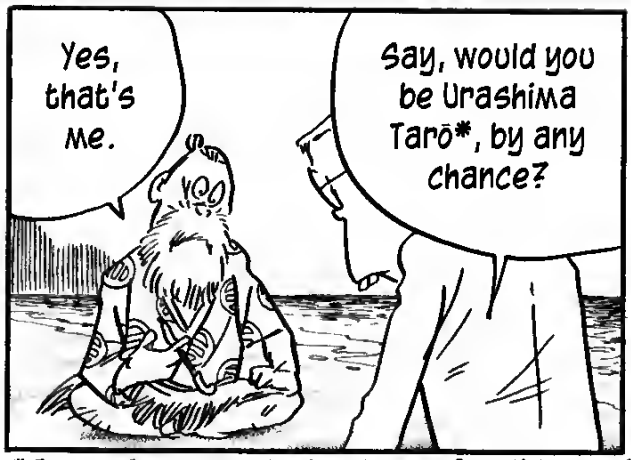
Pink salon, Aiko.

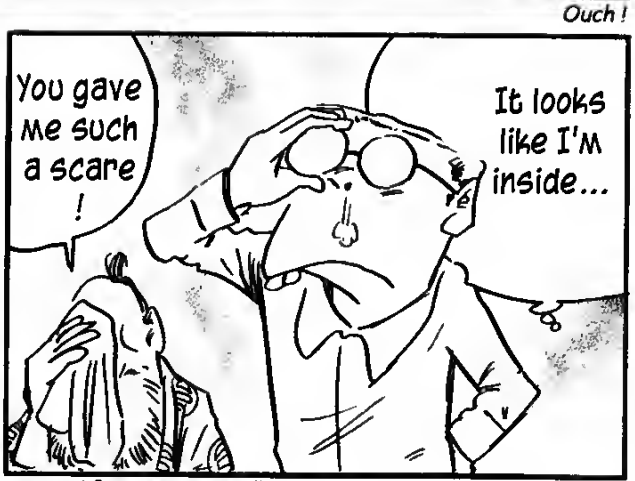
Zioup

Sting



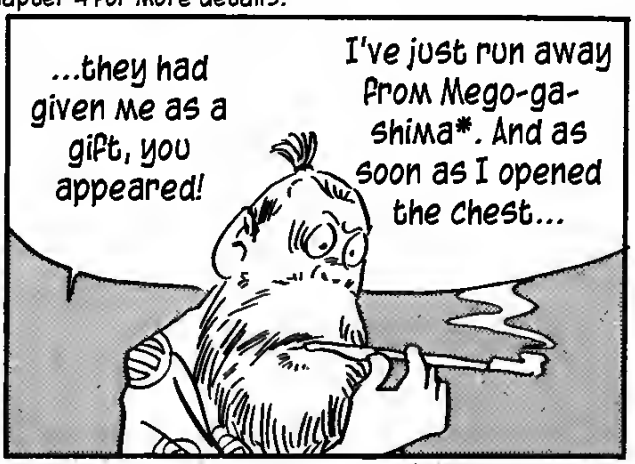
Fffh



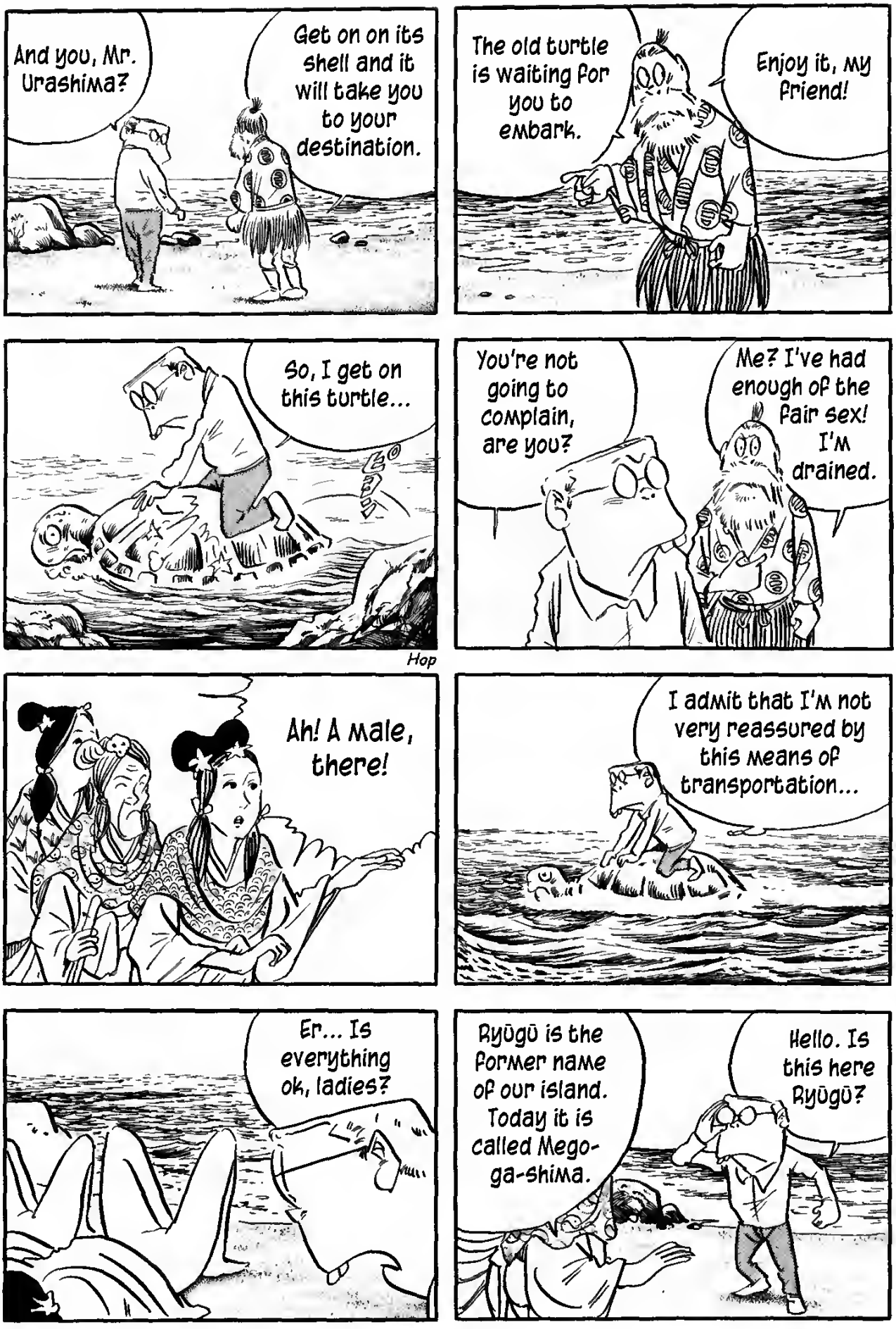


* Famous Japanese tale. See the note from Volume 1, Chapter 4 for more details.

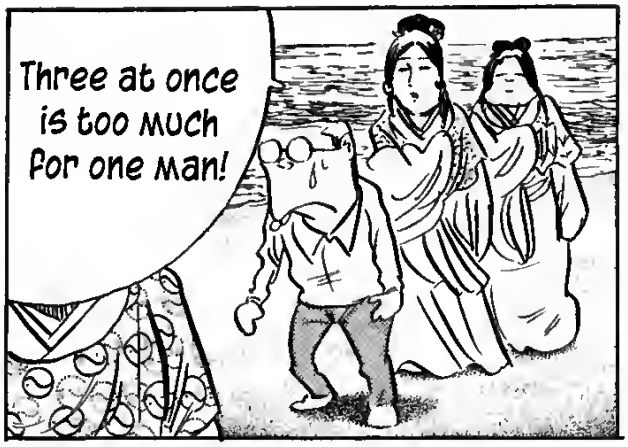
* Literally "the palace of the dragon."

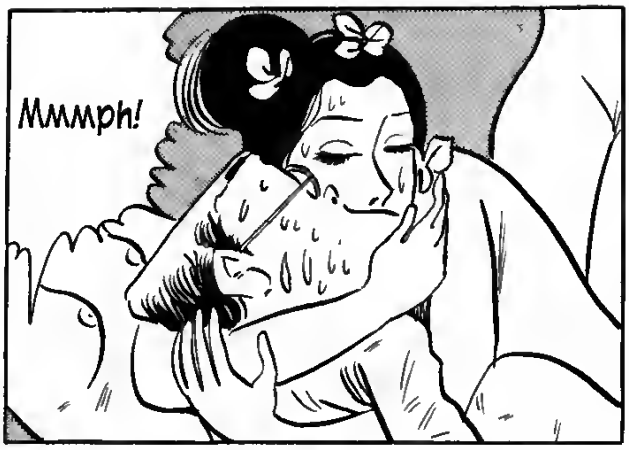


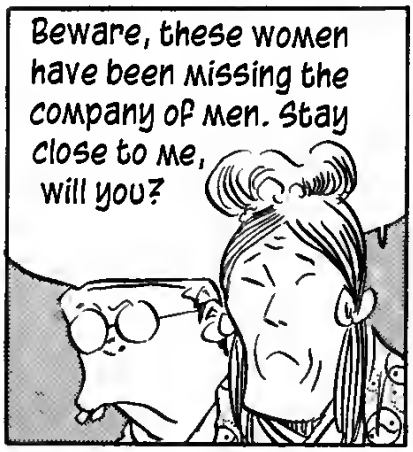
* Literally "the island of protected women."

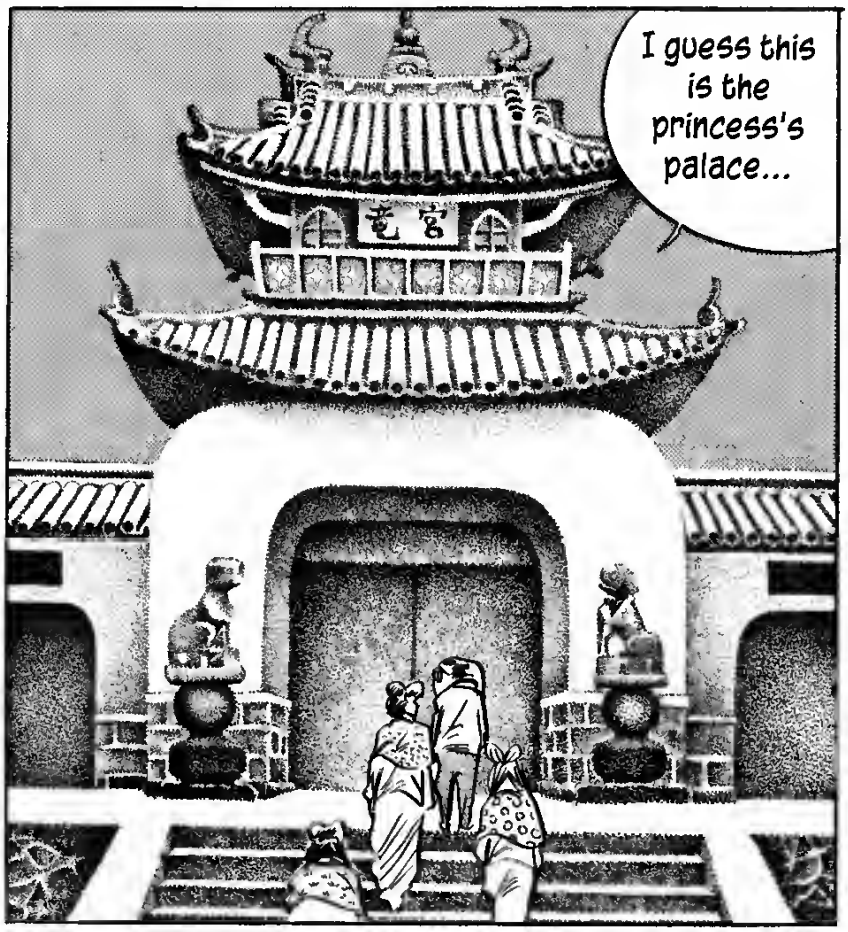

And you, Mr. Urashima?
Get on on its shell and it will take you to your destination.
The old turtle is waiting for you to embark.
Enjoy it, my friend!
So, I get on this turtle...
You're not going to complain, are you?
Me? I've had enough of the fair sex! I'm drained.
Hop
Ah! A male, there!
I admit that I'm not very reassured by this means of transportation...
Er... Is everything ok, ladies?
Ryūgū is the former name of our island. Today it is called Mego-ga-shima.
Hello. Is this here Ryūgū?

Oh... Oh really?
...and holder of the sacred offerings that are children.
...waiting for pollen blown by the wind from the South...
Don't worry, they're only opening up like flowers ...
So, we hope unceasingly for the arrival of a male, but it happens only rarely... Every fifty years, do you realize?
Of course, all these children are girls.
The scoop? On what?
But first, be gallant enough to give us the scoop.
Follow me, so that I may introduce you to Princess Oto-hime.
Uh... And where do I go, now?
On your charms, of course! Come on!
Geez!


Three at once is too much for one man!

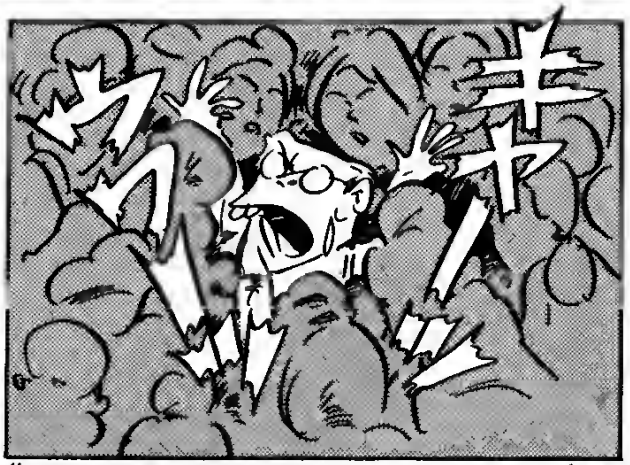

Mmmph!


Beware, these women have been missing the company of men. Stay close to me, will you?


I guess this is the princess's palace...
竜宮

Look! A male!

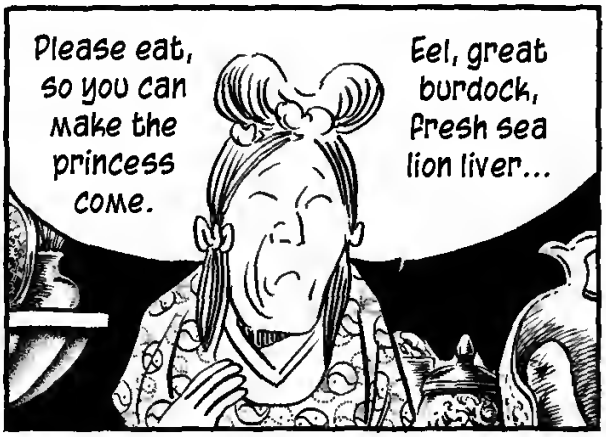
Sir, here is her highness, Princess Oto-hime.
Damn, what violence!


キキ

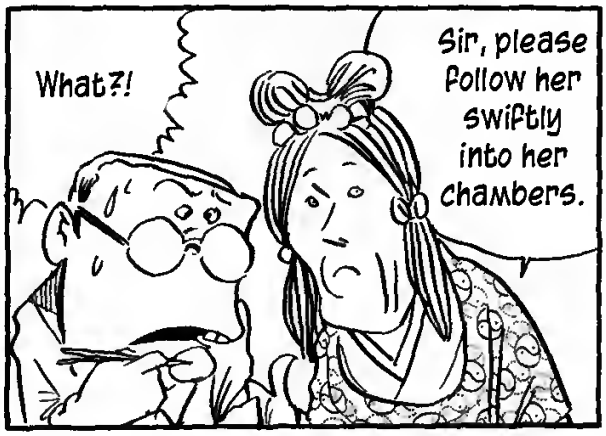
Nooo Aaah

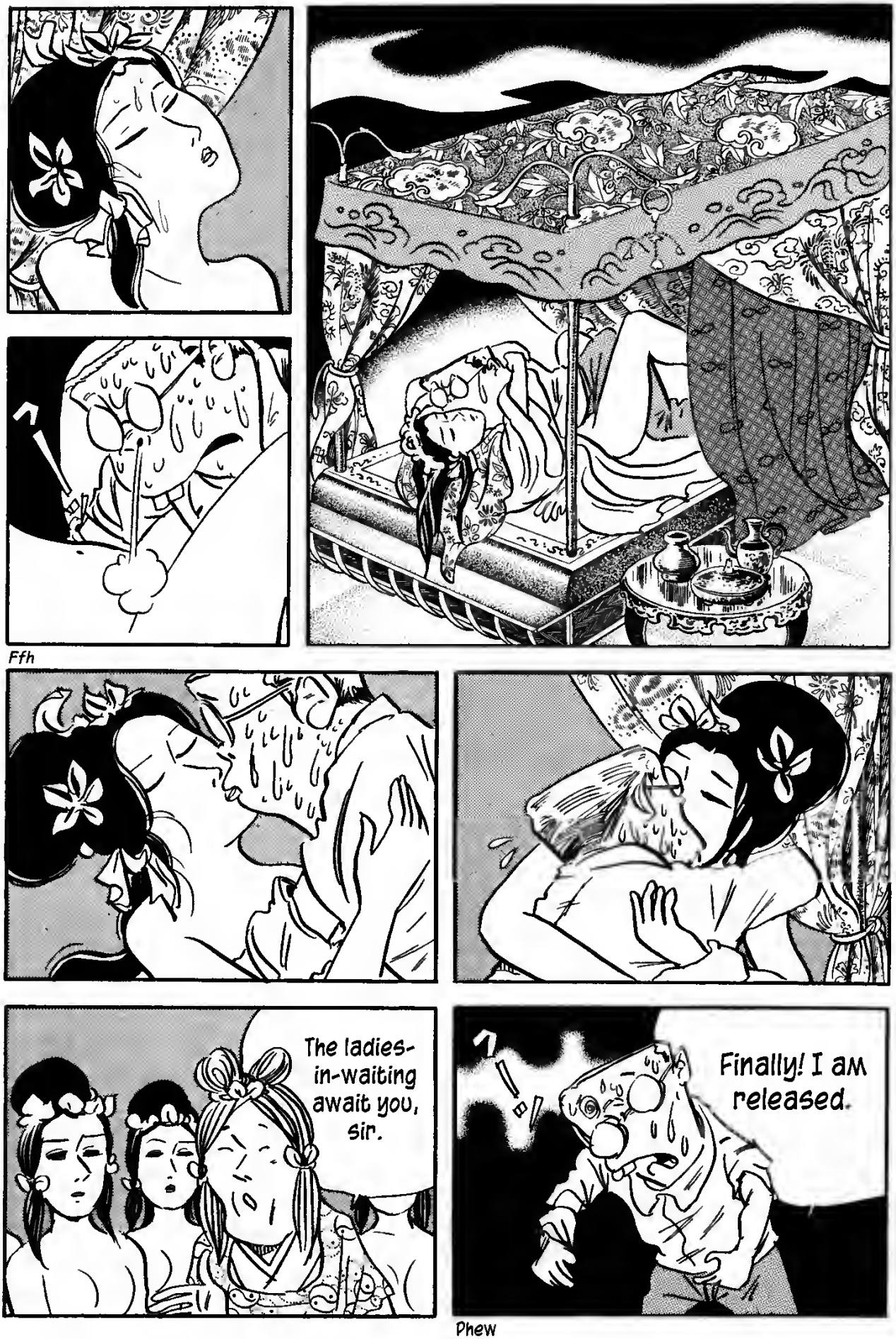
Good heavens, a male! What a godsend! Come build up your strength with these divine dishes, with a rarity comparable to yours...

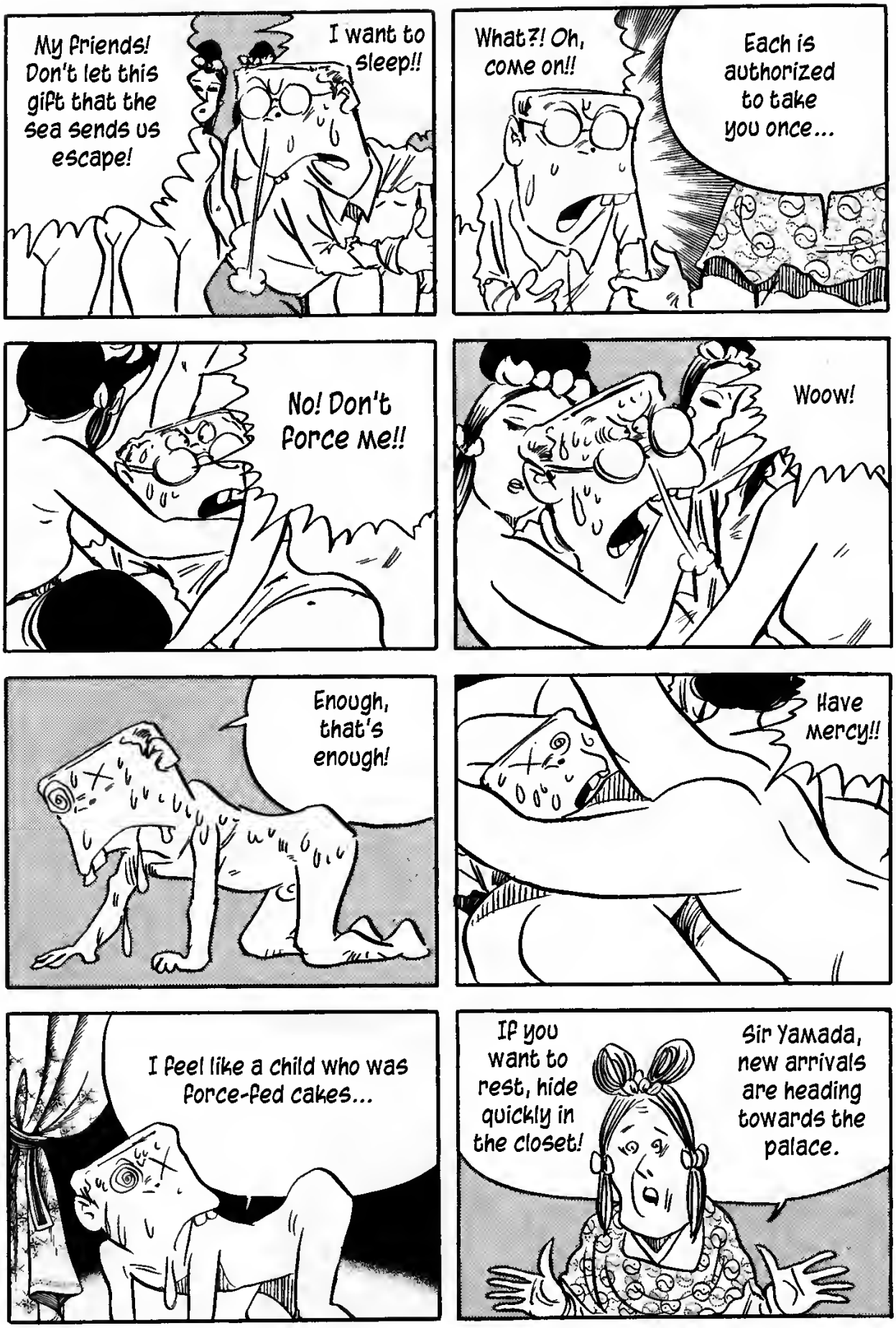
...I have forgotten their taste. The one named Yamada, come, please.
It's been so long since males have disappeared from our island, that I'm afraid...


Please eat, so you can make the princess come.
Eel, great burdock, fresh sea lion liver...

Your service to her highness will last three days and three nights.

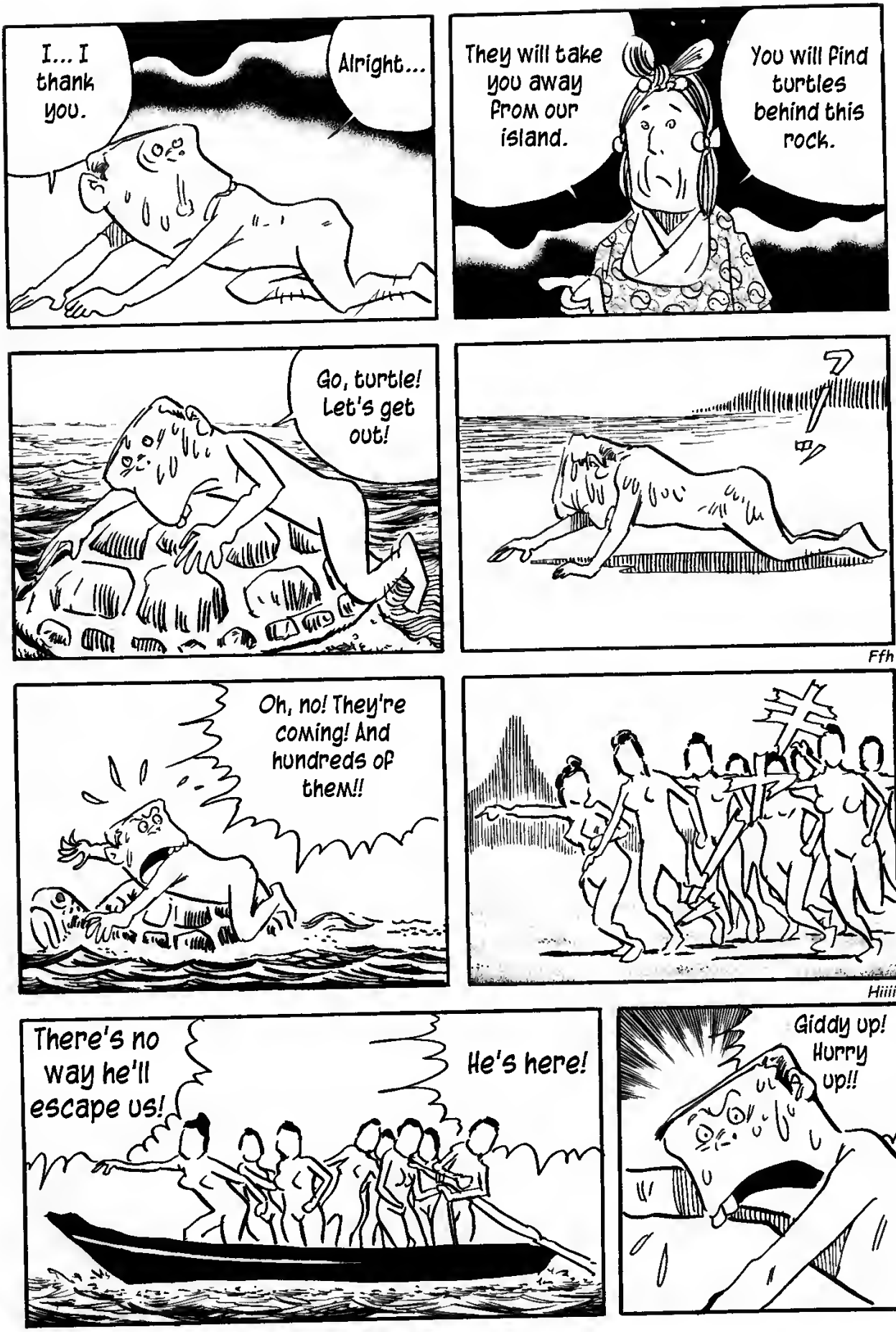

What?!
Sir, please follow her swiftly into her chambers.

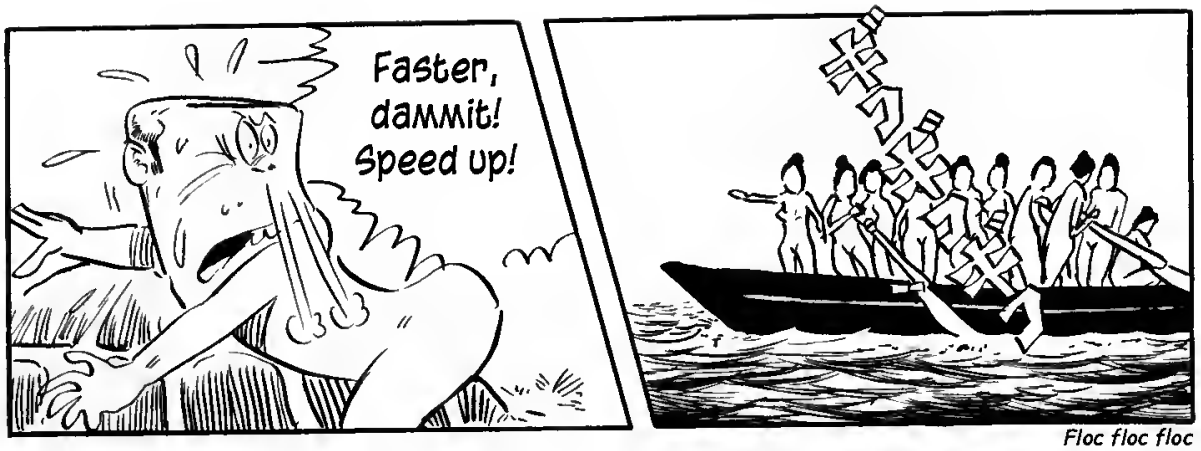

Ffh
The ladies-in-waiting await you, sir.
Finally! I am released.
Phew


My friends! Don't let this gift that the sea sends us escape!
I want to sleep!!
What?! Oh, come on!!
Each is authorized to take you once...
No! Don't force me!!
Woow!
Enough, that's enough!
Have Mercy!!
I feel like a child who was force-fed cakes...
If you want to rest, hide quickly in the closet!
Sir Yamada, new arrivals are heading towards the palace.

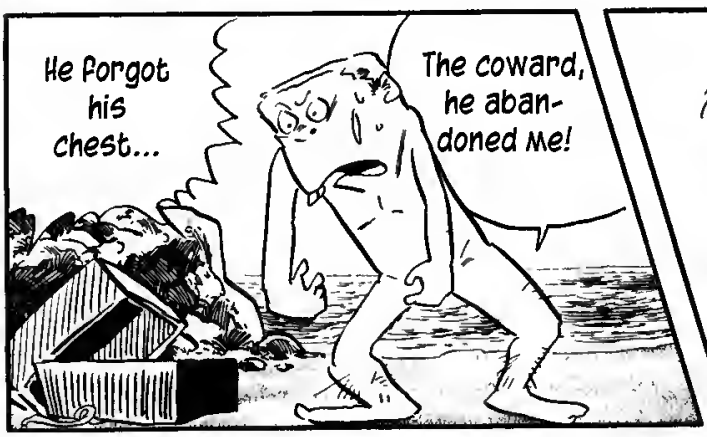
The male must have hidden in the closet!
You hear that? Is it snoring?
Too much of a good thing, as they say.
No, help!!
Zzz zzz
Shac
Yes, here he is...
Zzz zzz
Aaaah!
Sir, be ready to serve us body and soul! Note that fifty legions of beauties in heat are waiting for your embrace...

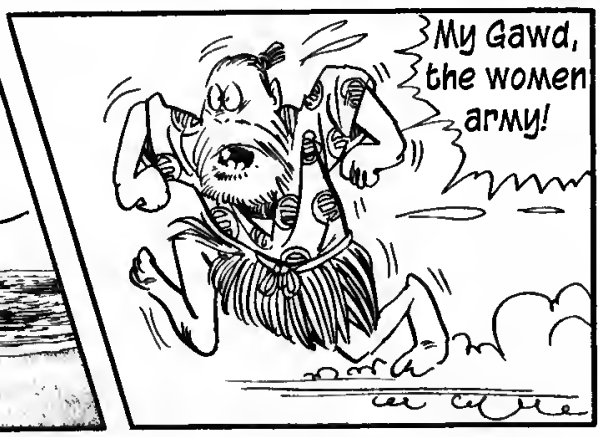
Unless right now, you and me...
So I have to wait 3 years before knowing you!
Don't complain too much. Me, I'm only 1250th on the list...
Damn, I understand that they are starved for sex, but still! At this rate, I'll end up dying!
That doesn't count, of course!
But... we already did it, when I landed on the island!
Aaaah!
Done deal!
Wait! If you tell me how to escape from this hell, then I am yours.
Please tell me how to get out of here! While I still can!
I think I'll die!
I... Soon I won't be able to move a finger...


I... I thank you.
Alright...
They will take you away from our island.
You will find turtles behind this rock.
Go, turtle! Let's get out!
Ffh
Oh, no! They're coming! And hundreds of them!!
Hiiiii
There's no way he'll escape us!
He's here!
Giddy up! Hurry up!!

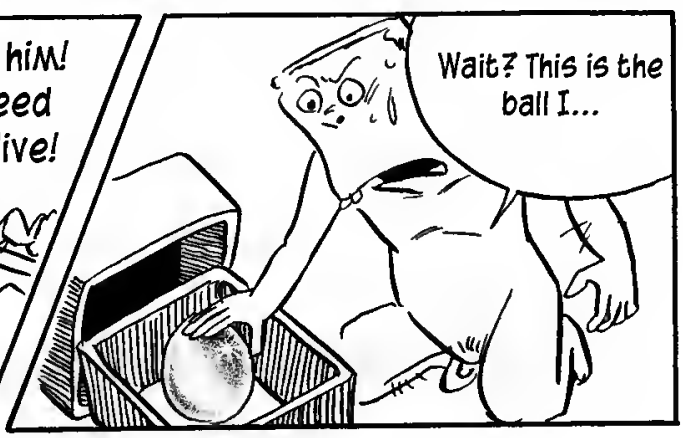

Faster, dammit! Speed up!
ギコギコ
Floc floc floc

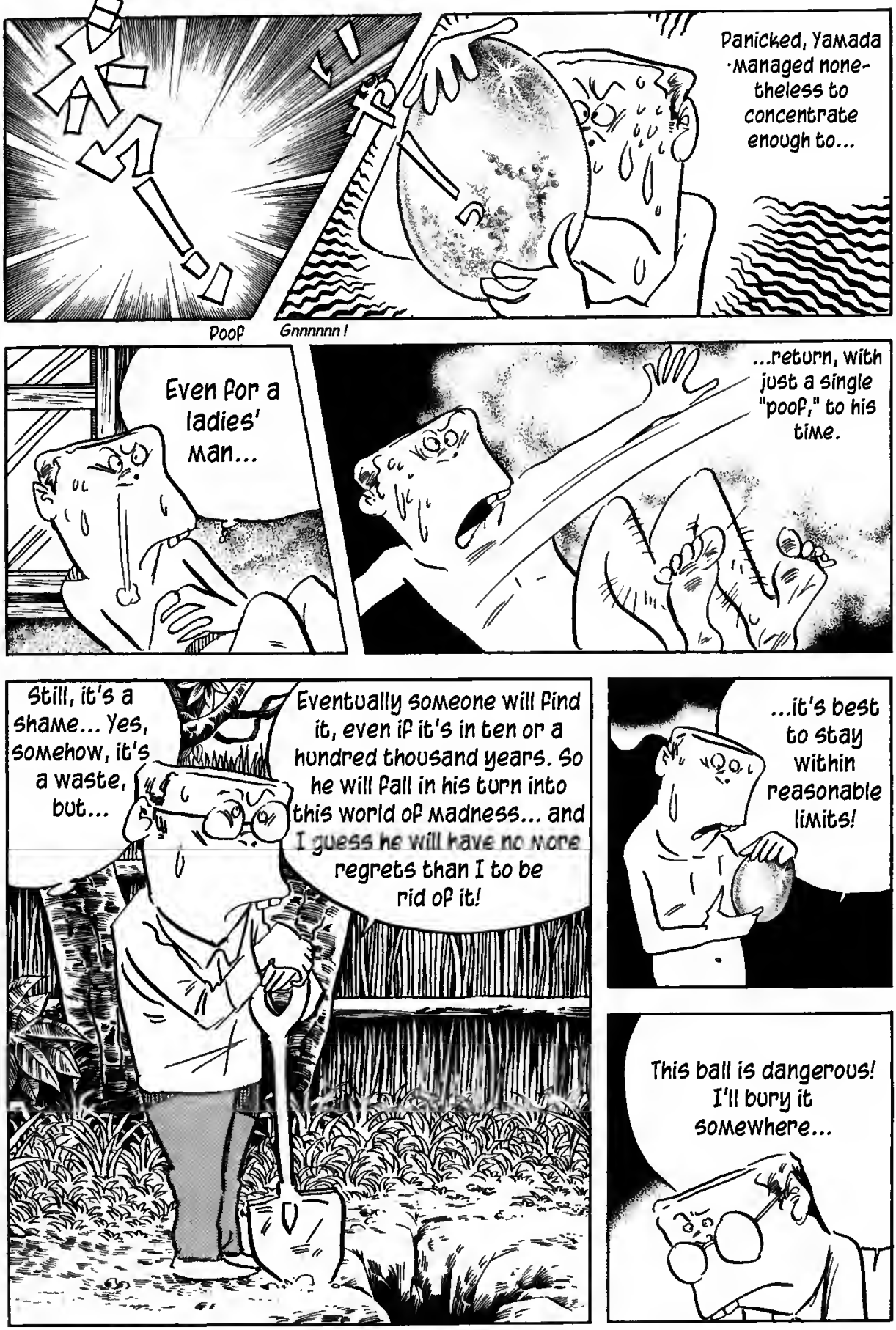
What ?!
Mr. Urashima! Help!!
ウラ!
Ouaah


He forgot his chest...
The coward, he abandoned me!


My Gawd, the women army!

Catch him! We need him alive!

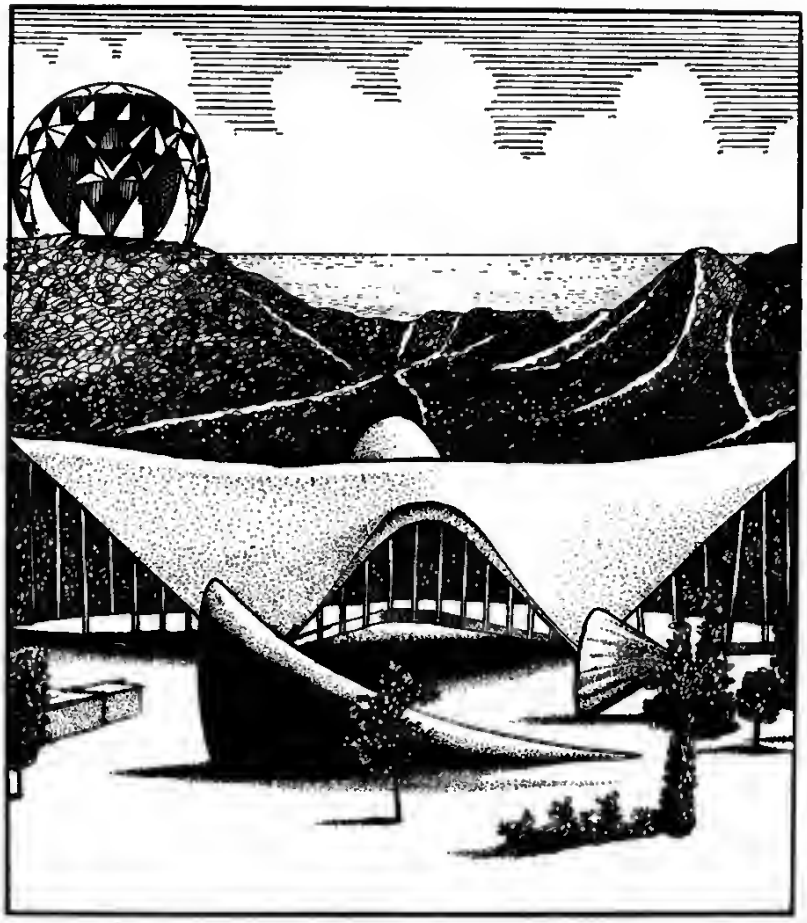

Wait? This is the ball I...

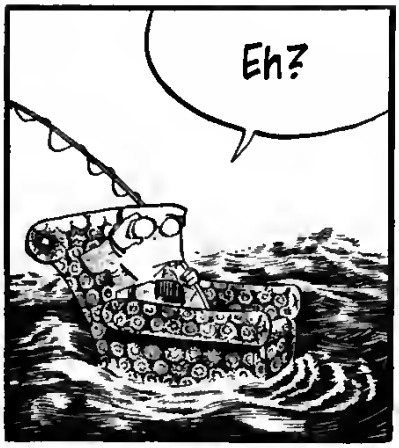

ボン！
Poof
Gnnnnnn!
Panicked, Yamada managed nonetheless to concentrate enough to...
Even for a ladies' man...
...return, with just a single "poof," to his time.
Still, it's a shame... Yes, somehow, it's a waste, but...
Eventually someone will find it, even if it's in ten or a hundred thousand years. So he will fall in his turn into this world of madness... and I guess he will have no more regrets than I to be rid of it!
...it's best to stay within reasonable limits!
This ball is dangerous! I'll bury it somewhere...

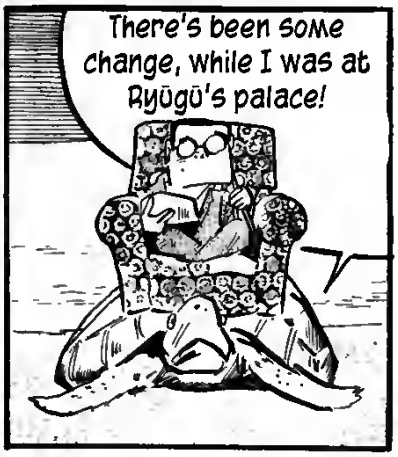
A Future of Hope

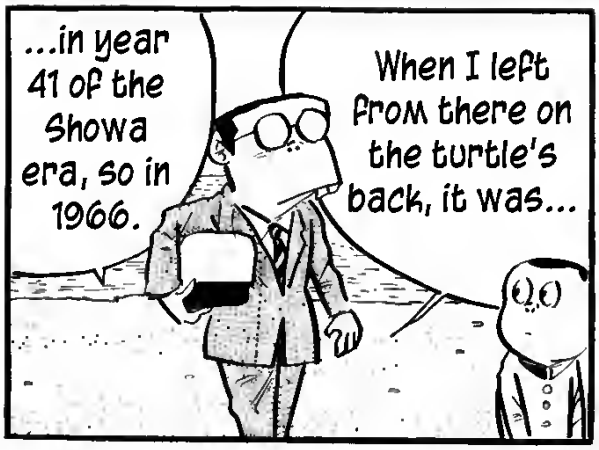
Year 141 of the Showa era*

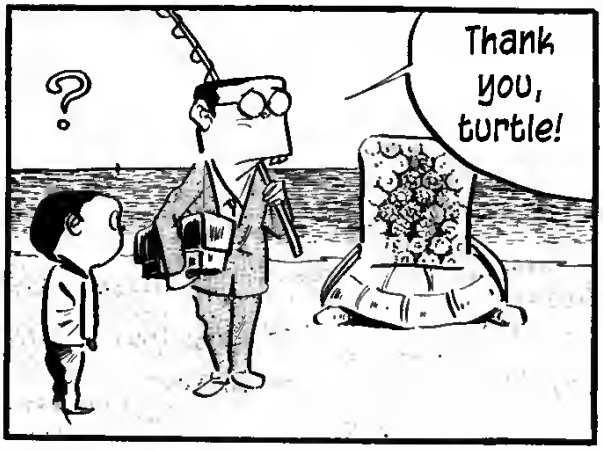
* Corresponding to year 2066.

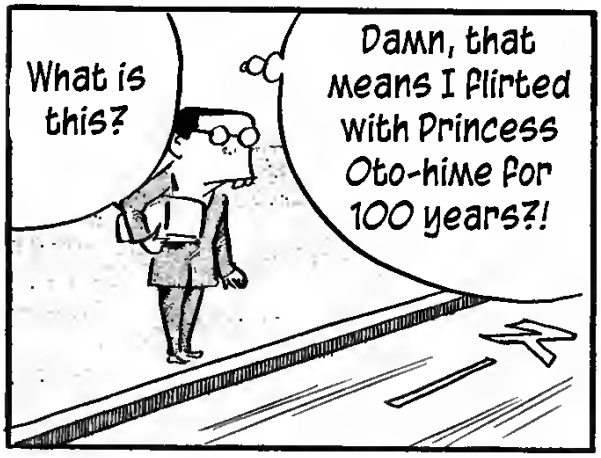



Eh?


There's been some change, while I was at Ryūgū's palace!


...in year 41 of the Showa era, so in 1966.
When I left from there on the turtle's back, it was...

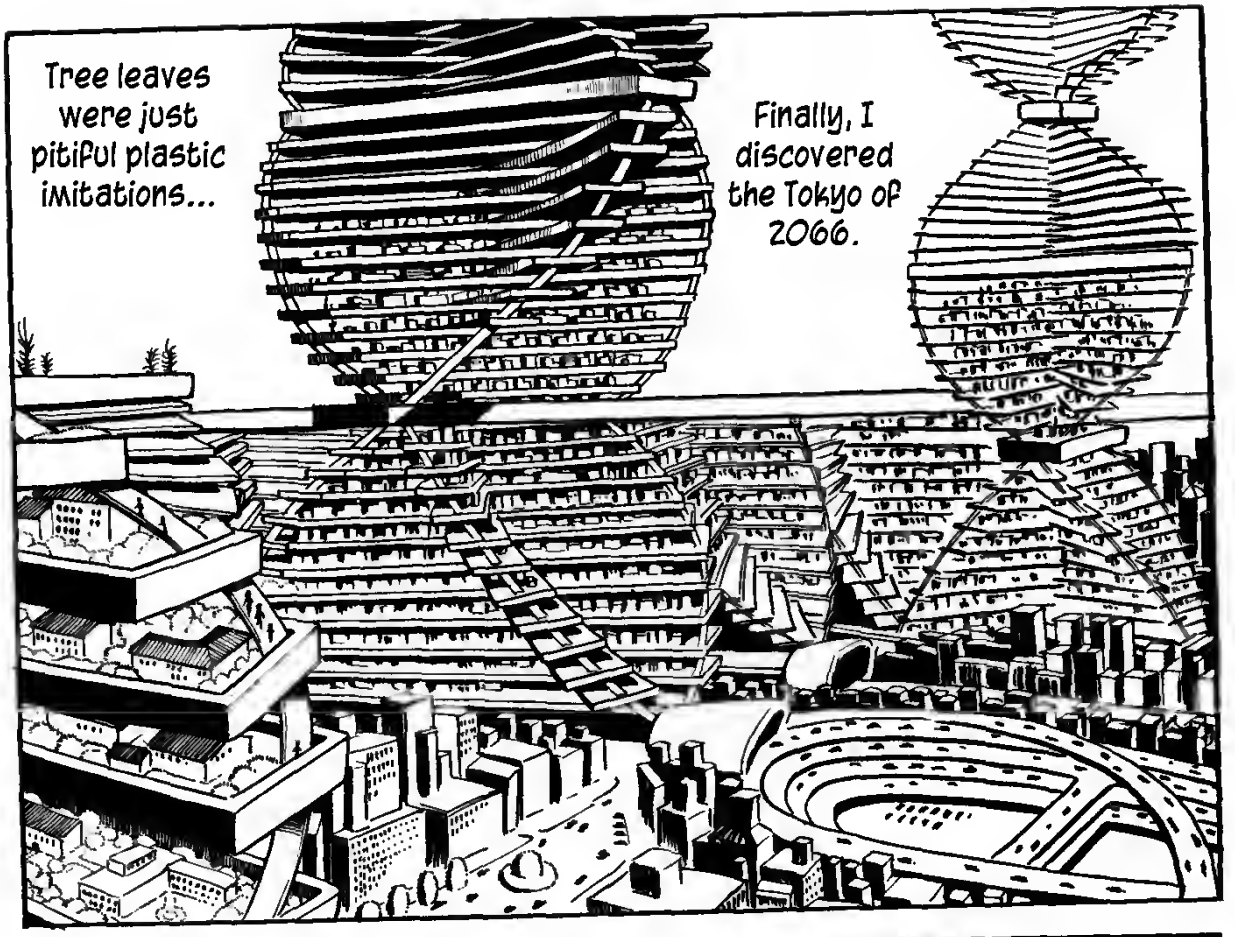

?
Thank you, turtle!

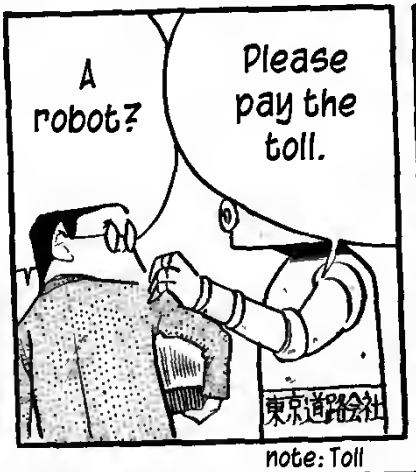

What is this?
Damn, that means I flirted with Princess Oto-hime for 100 years?!

In year 141 of Showa.
Tell me, in what year are we?

Sssh

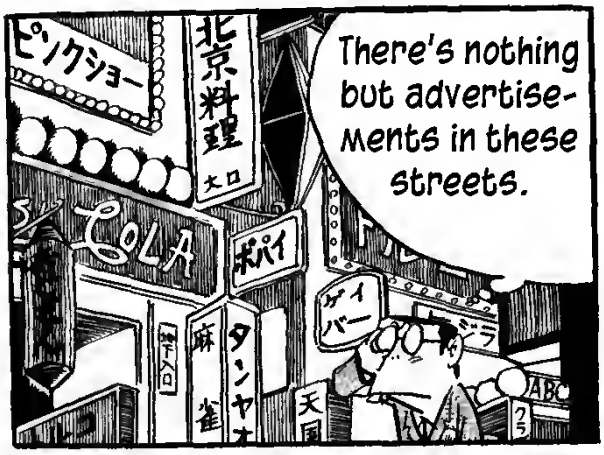
After all, I left the country for 100 years! Technology has surely progressed.
Looks like a road. It moves on its own!
So, the roads are moving? Well, why not?
As I approached Tokyo, I noticed that the trees disappeared in favor of monumental sculptures with strange shapes. I immediately interpreted this change as a consequence of pollution.



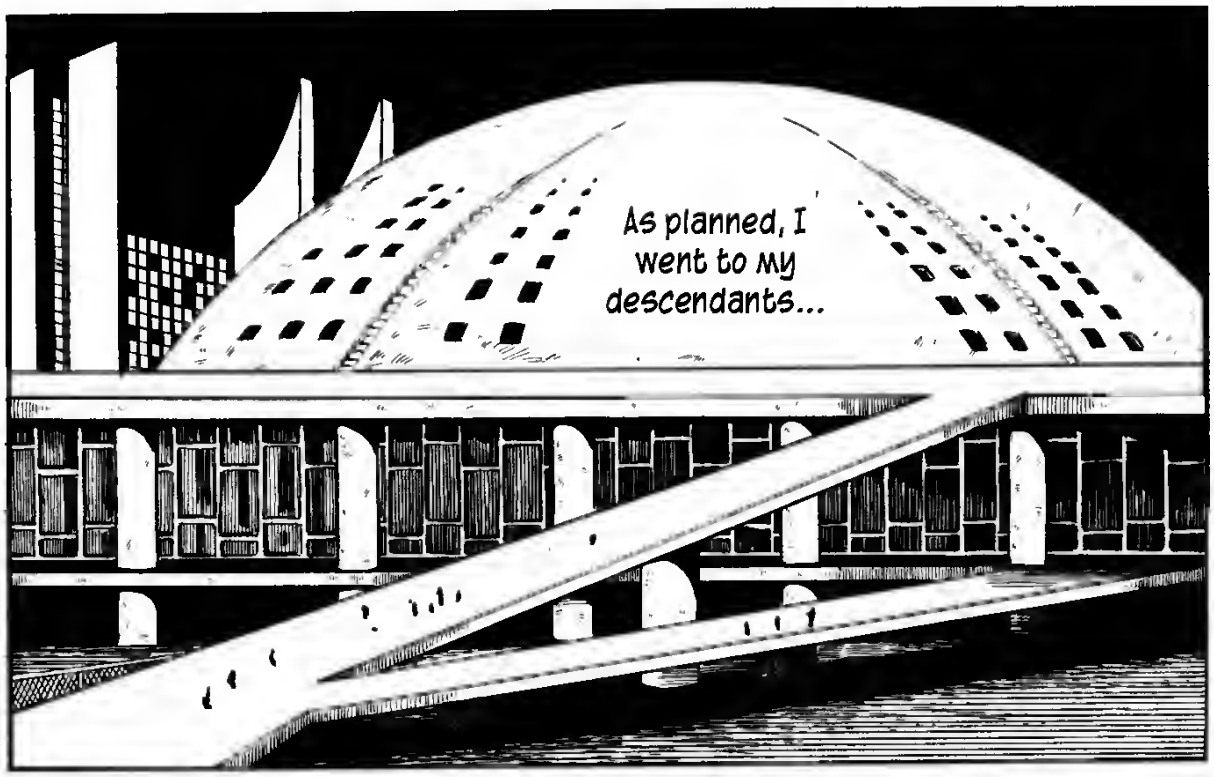


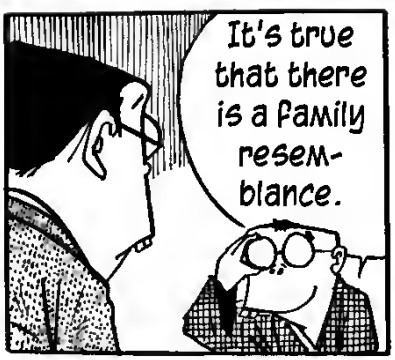
note: Toll

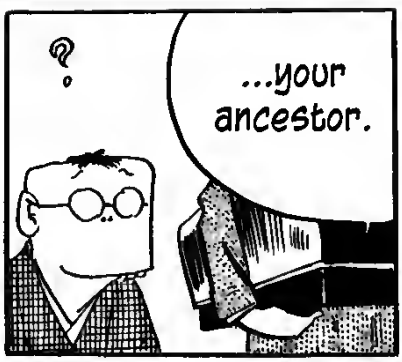
note: End of the rolling track

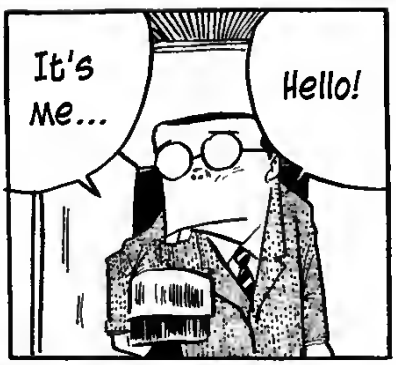


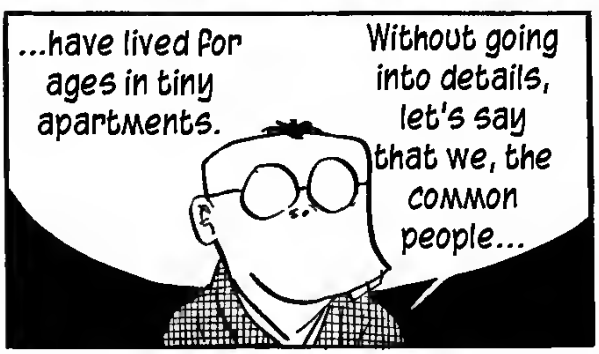
Oh, a pretty woman!
What a funny show, with this motley crowd... Elephantine giants and lilliputian gnomes were walking side by side.
Ziup
I... I didn't know. 8,000 yen, would that suit you?
In accordance with the law, you owe me 20,000 yen for having had the pleasure of staring at my face.
Excuse me?
Pay me 20,000 yen.
What if I went to visit my descendants? I could always live with them...
My wealth is melting like snow in the sun...
Everything is about money here!

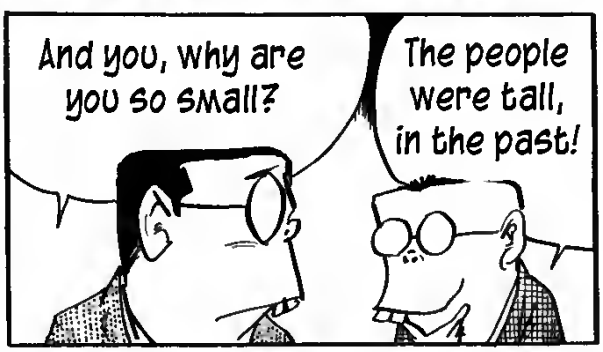

As planned, I went to my descendants...


It's true that there is a family resem-blance.

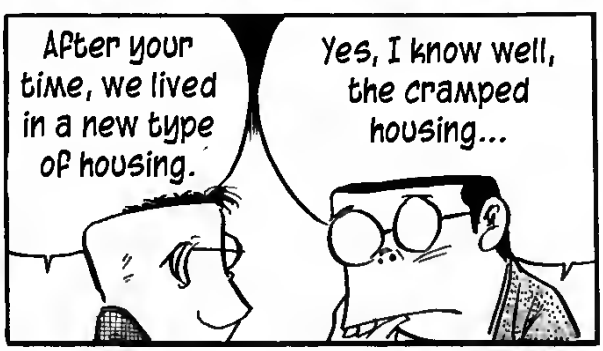

?
...your ancestor.

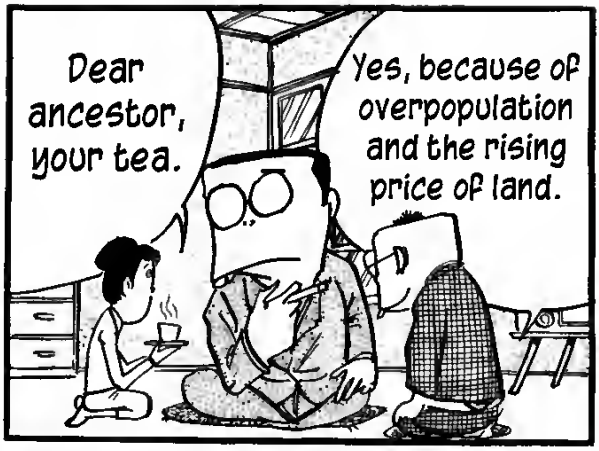

It's me...
Hello!

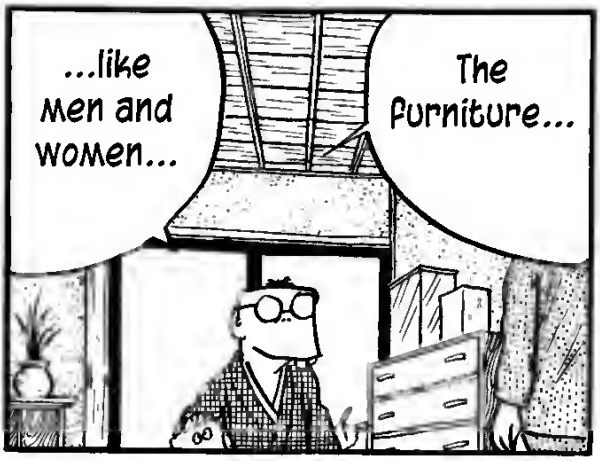

...have lived for ages in tiny apartments.
Without going into details, let's say that we, the common people...

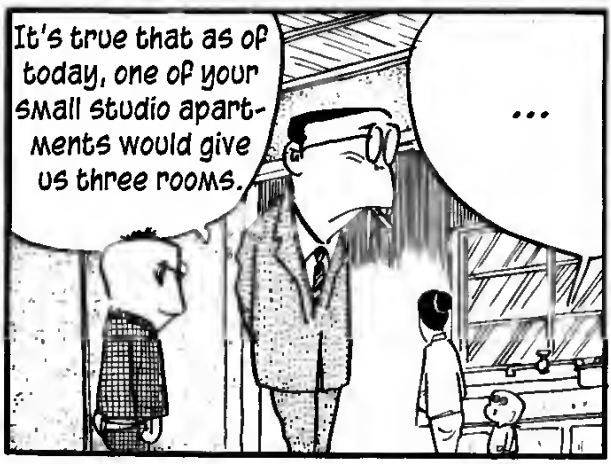

And you, why are you so small?
The people were tall, in the past!

Smaller.
What kind?


After your time, we lived in a new type of housing.
Yes, I know well, the cramped housing...

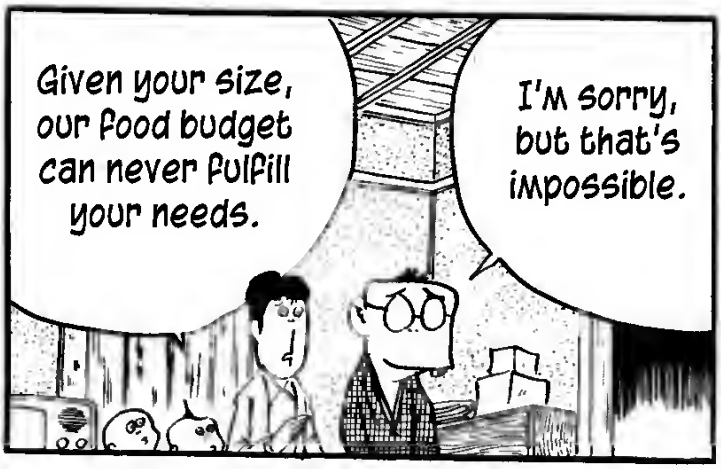






So, the giant that I had seen in the street belonged to the privileged classes. Living in big houses, their bodies grew comfortable.

It reminds me of the old Chinese practice of wearing tiny shoes to keep children's feet...
...adapted themselves to live in these homes.



Look, yesterday, a law was passed that gives money a higher value than human life...
Our time is much harder than yours.
Hmm... Lacking money, they don't eat enough to grow, either.
And the Ministry of Health authorizes the manufacture of sausages made from human flesh...
This is outrageous! What a terrible society!
...would one day appear to me as an era where life was good...
Well, it's time for me to go. And thank you for your hospitality!
I wouldn't have thought that my era, where we still had to fight to survive...

The Fight of a Lifetime

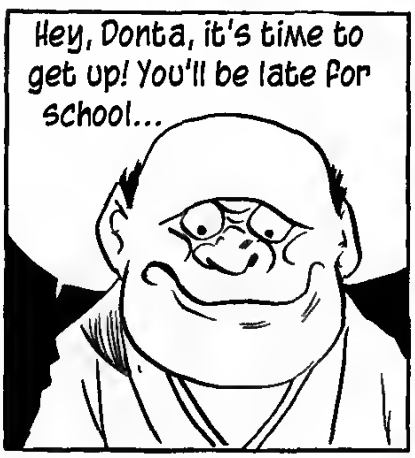
I don't know when it all began...

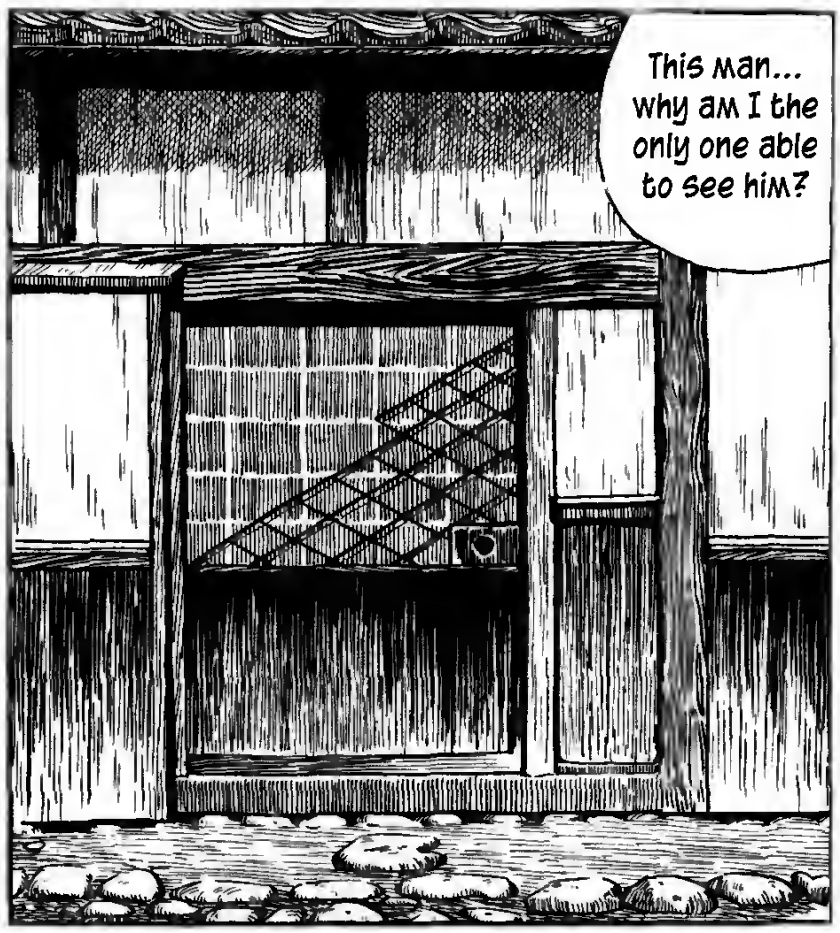
Who's the man?

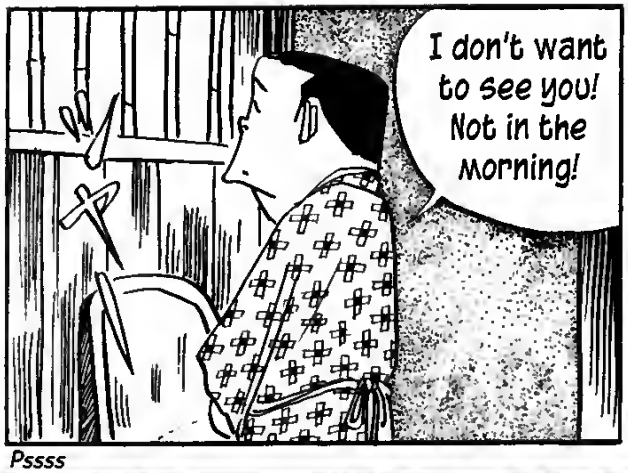
Unless it was the day of my father's funeral. There, behind the familiar faces, a grimacing face was staring at me.

Hi hi hi hi

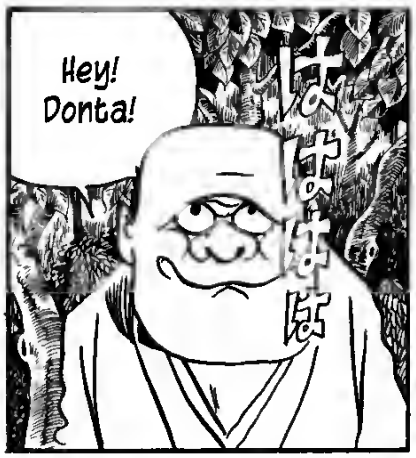
Zzz zzz



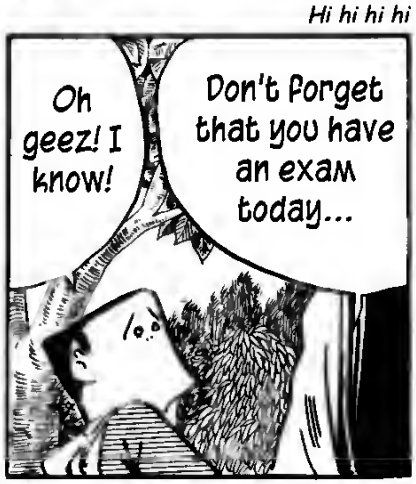


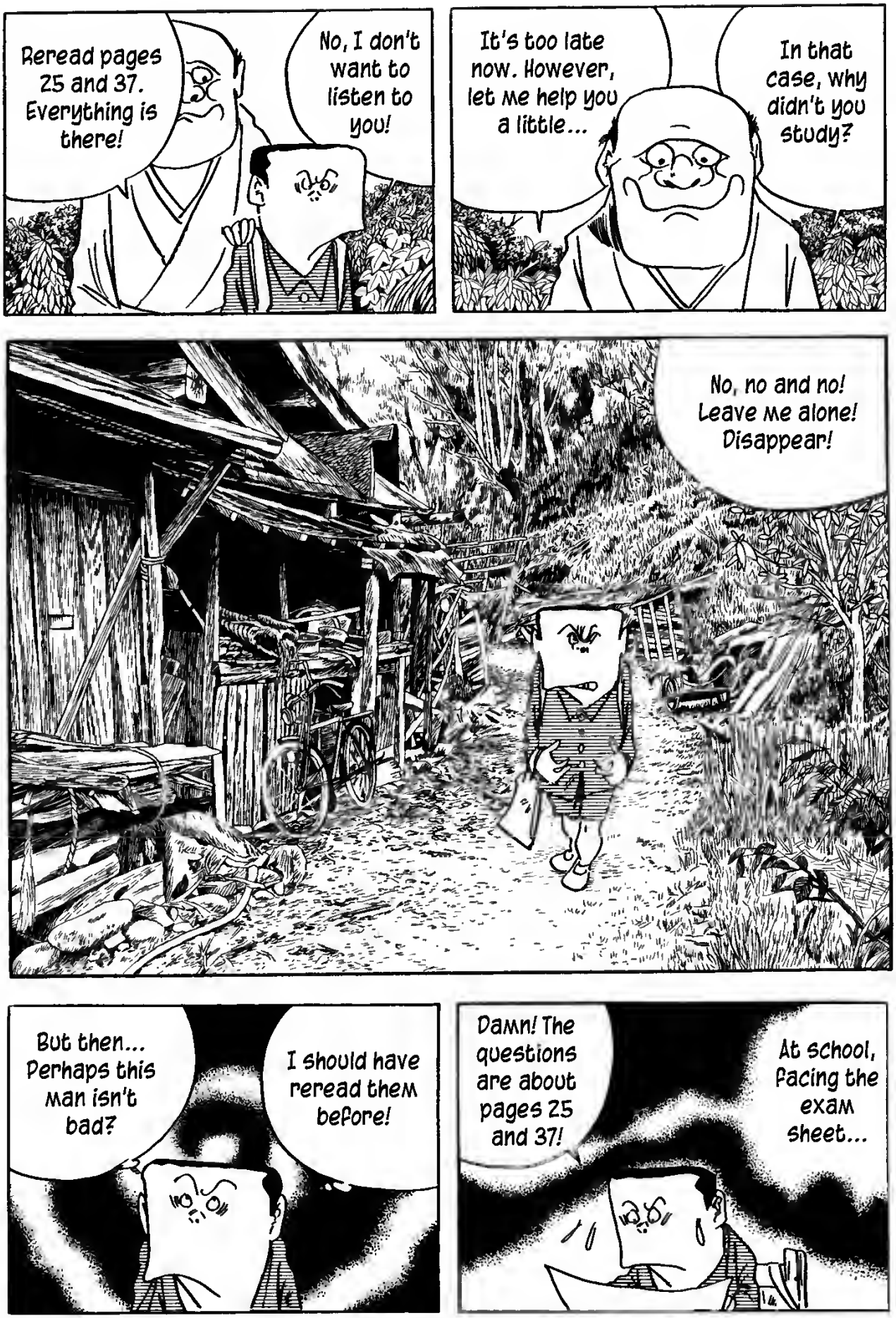


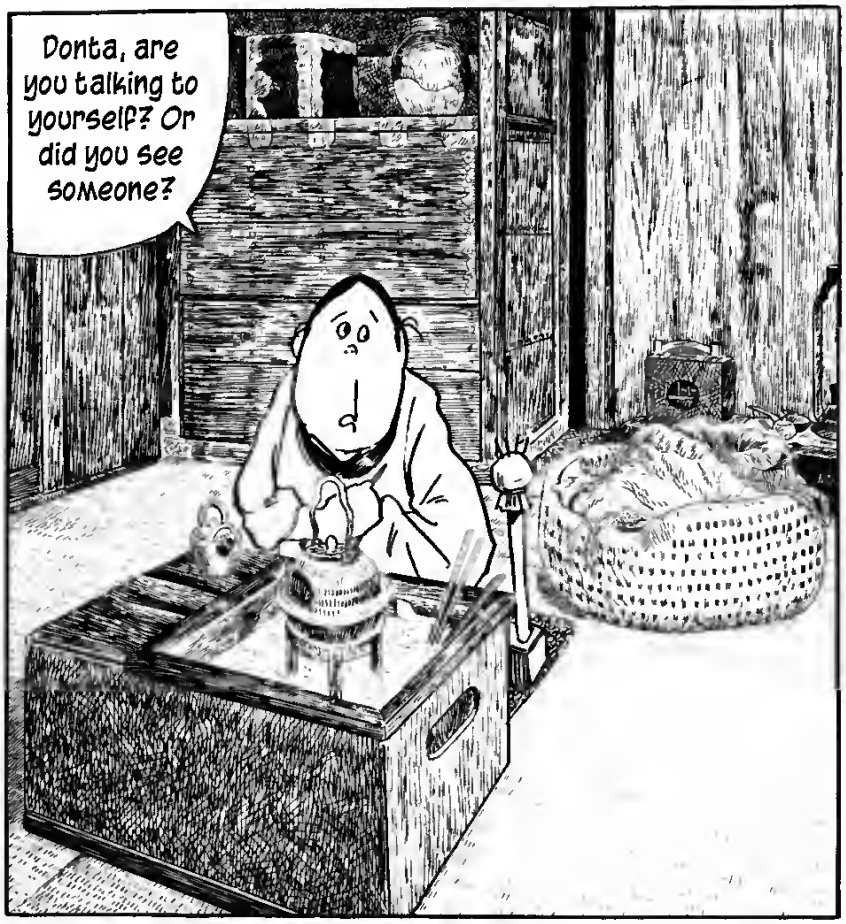
Pssss



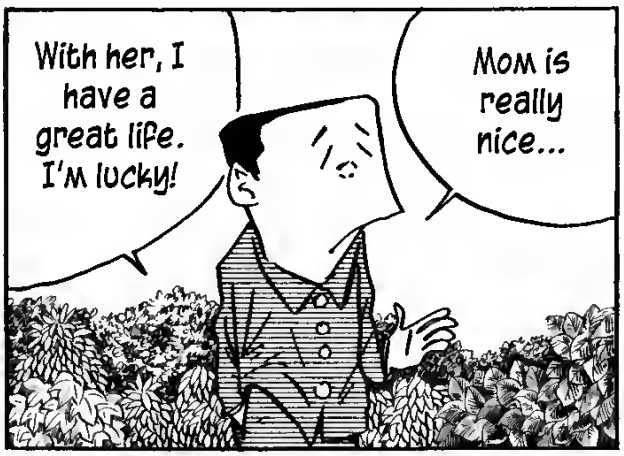
Hi hi hi hi

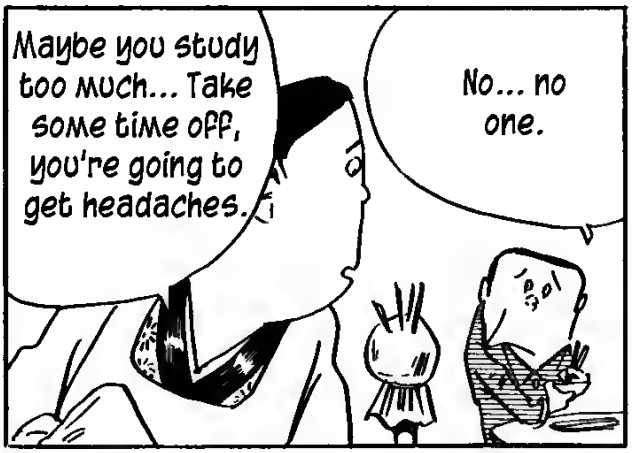



Reread pages 25 and 37. Everything is there!
No, I don't want to listen to you!
It's too late now. However, let me help you a little...
In that case, why didn't you study?
No, no and no! Leave me alone! Disappear!
But then... Perhaps this man isn't bad?
I should have reread them before!
Damn! The questions are about pages 25 and 37!
At school, facing the exam sheet...

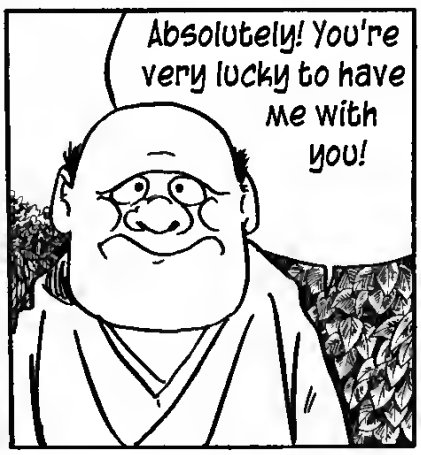


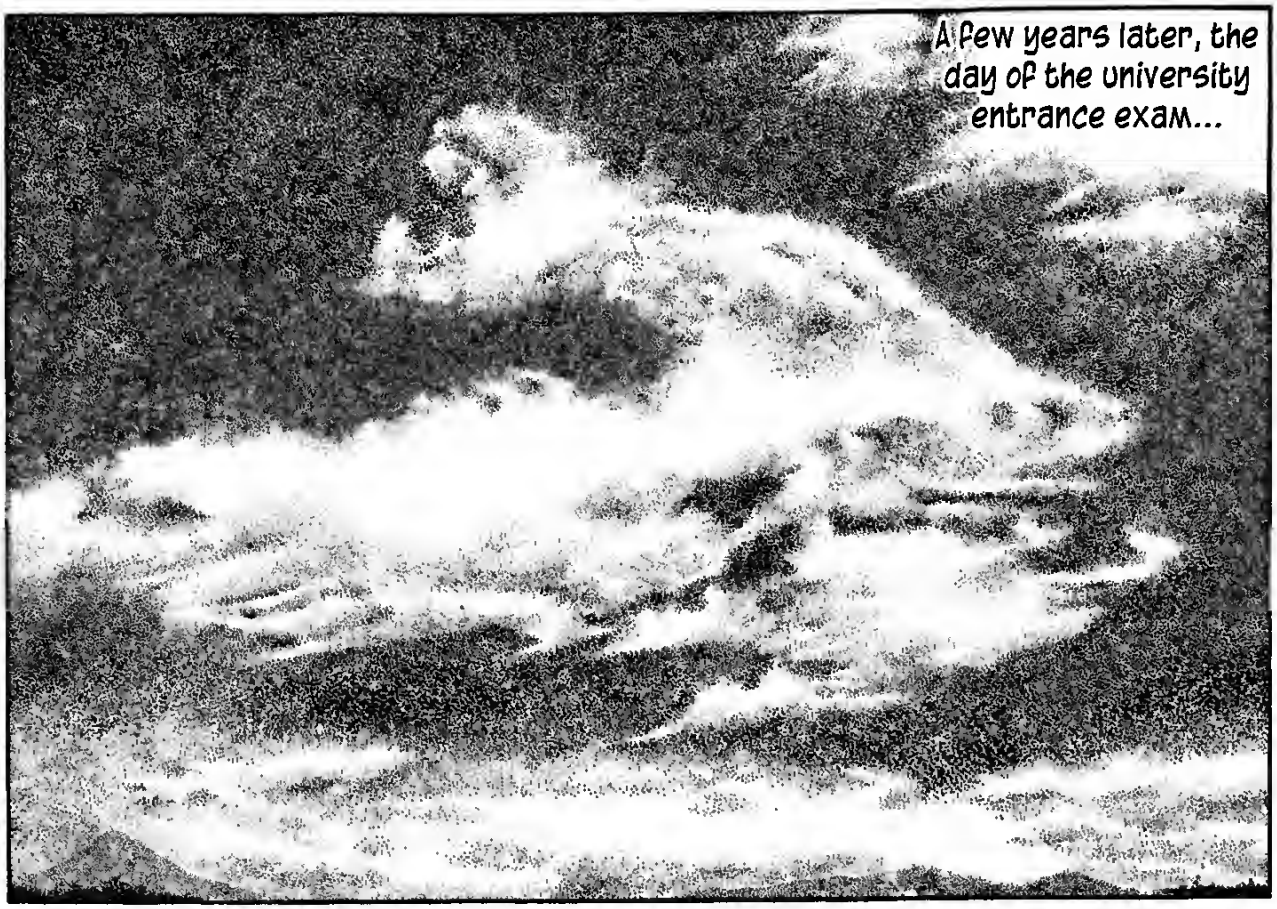
Hi hi hi hi





Hi hi hi hi




A few years later, the day of the university entrance exam...

But I failed the exams. My life then seemed to deviate from its carefree course...

Hey Donta!

Really?
No need to worry! I can already tell you what subjects will be on it!

Mom was right, this guy is ruining my life!
This is your fault! You misled me!
You can still see that man? If this continues, you'll have to go see a doctor...
But you're perfectly healthy! In any case, I see nothing that prevents you from pursuing your studies.
はははははは
Hi hi hi hi

は
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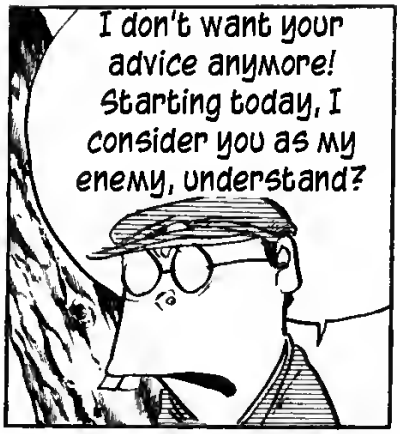
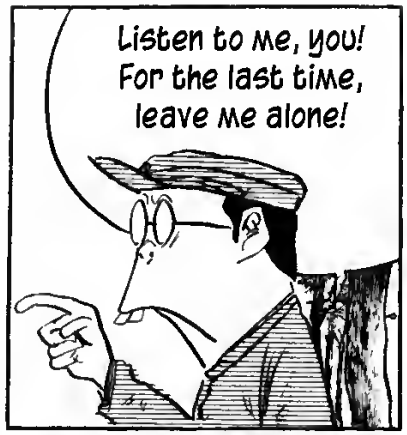
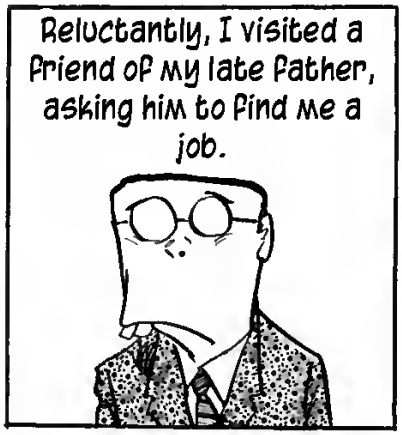
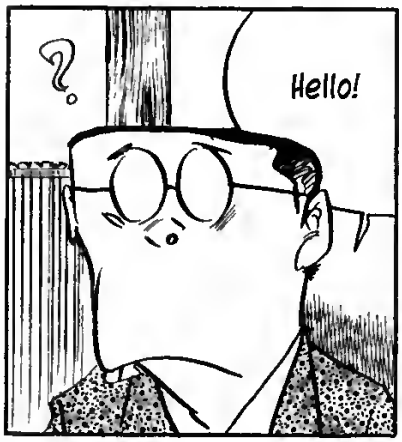
は

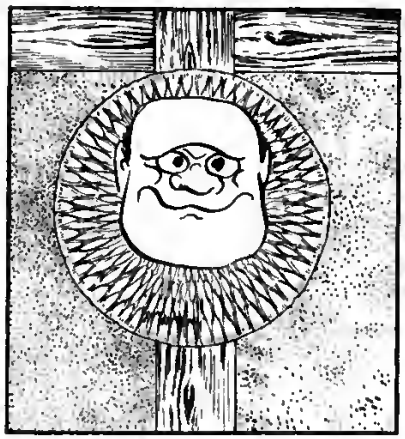
Hi hi hi hi


I don't want your advice anymore! Starting today, I consider you as my enemy, understand?

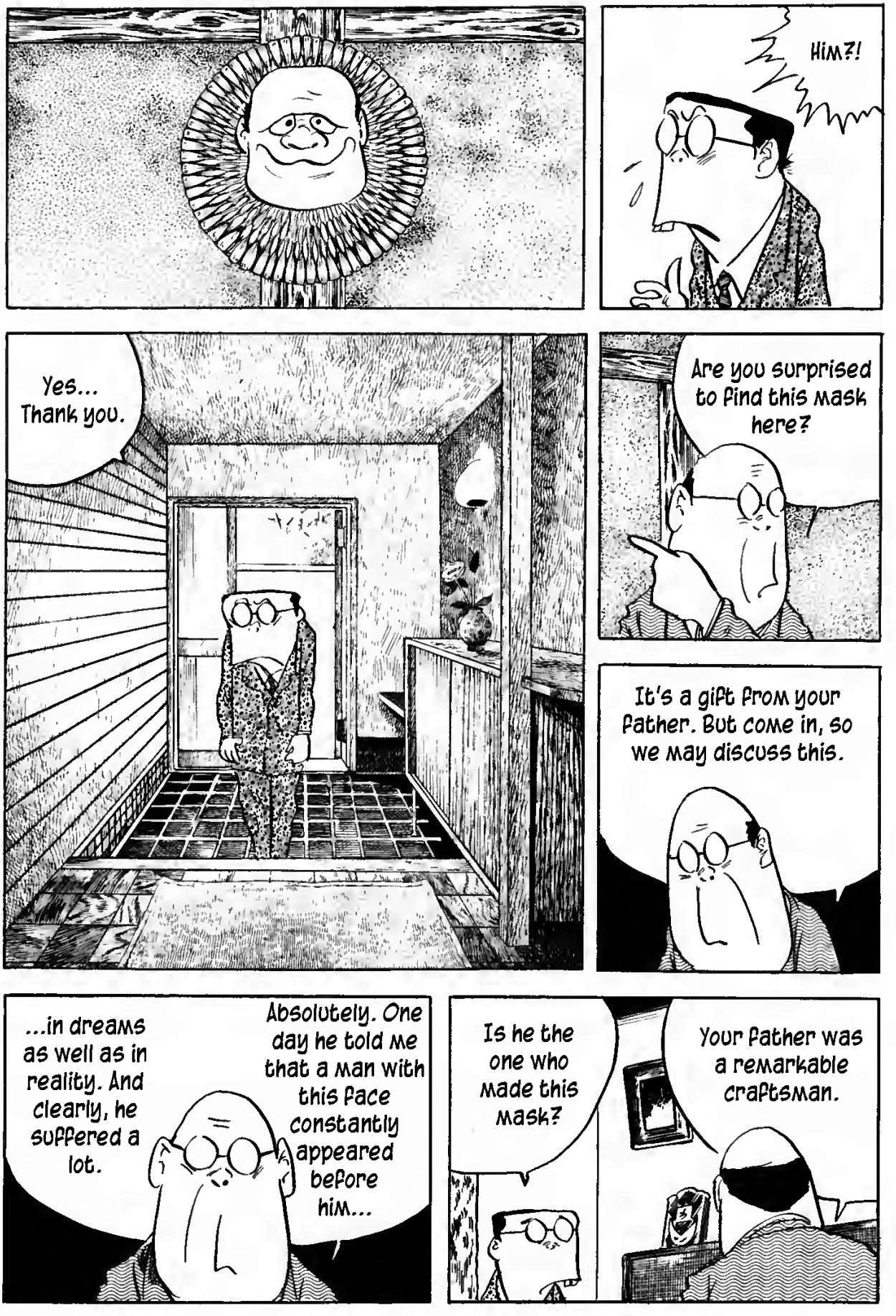

Listen to me, you! For the last time, leave me alone!

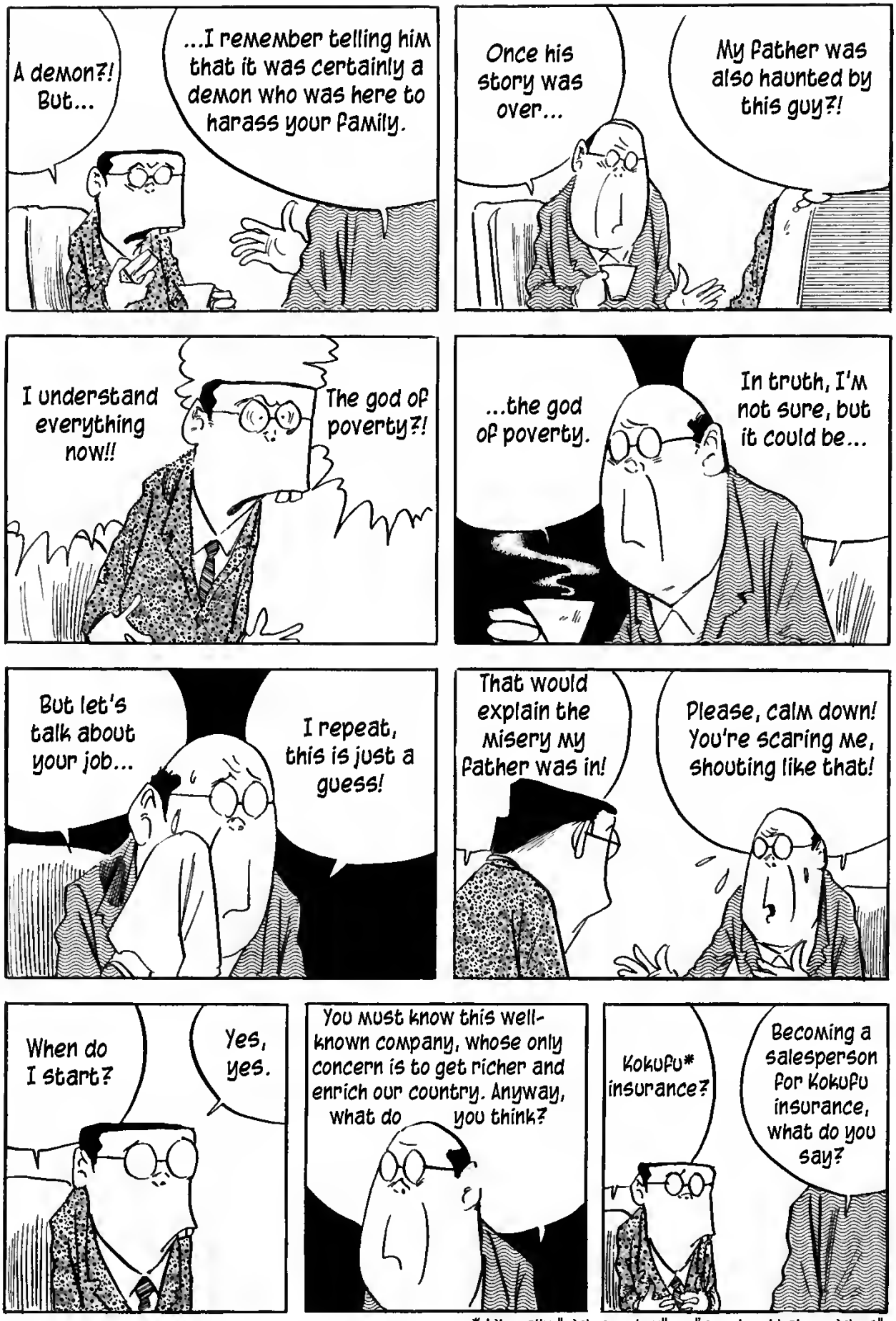

Reluctantly, I visited a friend of my late father, asking him to find me a job.


?
Hello!



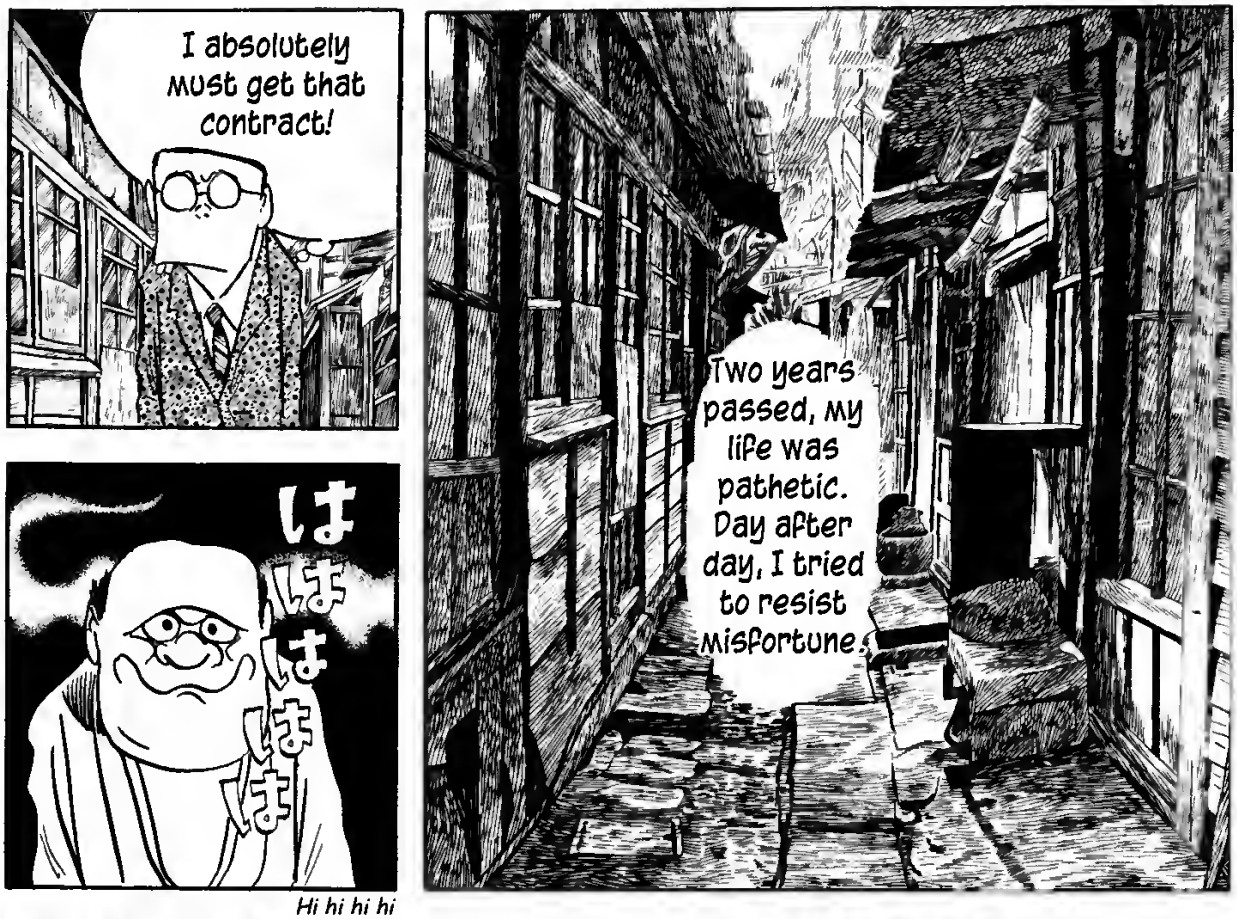
I don't know if he took a sudden dislike to me, but my situation got worse. My girlfriend left me, I was called to the army. To top it off, I missed the interview for the job of my dreams. In short, everything went wrong.
★カラッポ
ビール


HIM?!
Are you surprised to find this mask here?
Yes... Thank you.
It's a gift from your father. But come in, so we may discuss this.
Your father was a remarkable craftsman.
Is he the one who made this mask?
Absolutely. One day he told me that a man with this face constantly appeared before him...
...in dreams as well as in reality. And clearly, he suffered a lot.

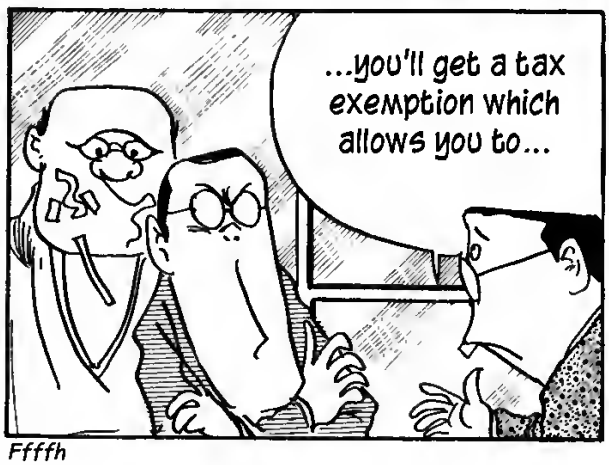

A demon?! But...
...I remember telling him that it was certainly a demon who was here to harass your family.
Once his story was over...
My father was also haunted by this guy?!
I understand everything now!!
The god of poverty?!
...the god of poverty.
In truth, I'm not sure, but it could be...
But let's talk about your job...
I repeat, this is just a guess!
That would explain the misery my father was in!
Please, calm down! You're scaring me, shouting like that!
When do I start?
Yes, yes.
You must know this well-known company, whose only concern is to get richer and enrich our country. Anyway, what do you think?
Kokufu* insurance?
Becoming a salesperson for Kokufu insurance, what do you say?

* Literally "rich country" or "country that enriches"

Ffffh
Ah! You're here?!
はははは
Hi hi hi hi
He... He breathed on me! I feel very weak... as if I had no more motivation!
What's happening to you?
Yuck! No!
Don't let it carry you away, or you will never be happy!
Be brave, hold on!
Yes, I feel weak, completely drained of my strength...
He must have instilled in you what we call "the lazy puff." This removes any willpower from whoever its victim is...
You're right. I will fight! Yes, I'll do it!
Your father was also persecuted. He fought with all his might, until the end! Follow his example, resist!


I absolutely must get that contract!
Two years passed, my life was pathetic. Day after day, I tried to resist misfortune.
はは
はは
はは

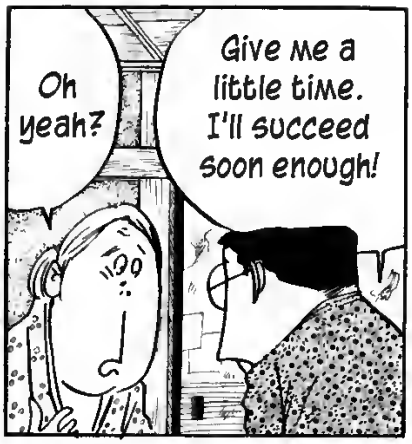
Hi hi hi hi



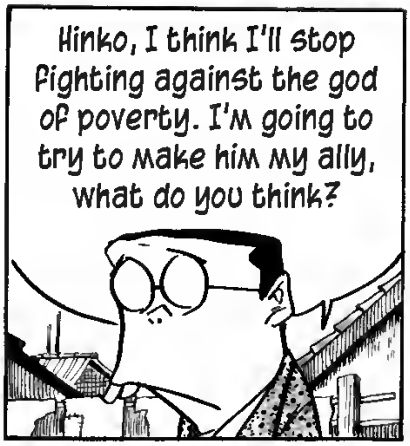
Ffffh

And here I was right...
I'll think about all this, Mr. Hinda*. I'll reply next time.
He'll certainly reject my proposition...
Oh no! He breathed "the refusal puff" on my client.
* the "hin" in Hinda means "poor"
But those who don't see him? They ignore the real source of their misfortune.
Luck, happiness and wealth were not for me! I know because I saw him, that god who was on my back!
You think you can afford to quibble, considering what you're earning?!
Er, but in the photo, she...
I found you a nice girl, she has agreed to marry you.
Mom?
Donta!

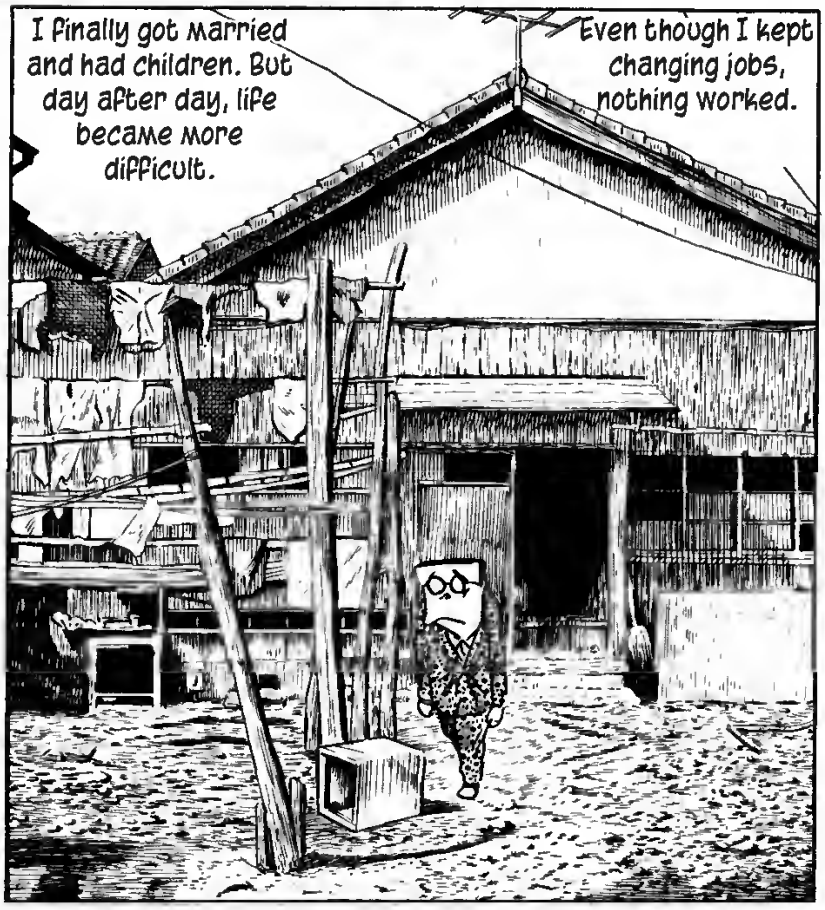
The success to which I aspired seemed unattainable.

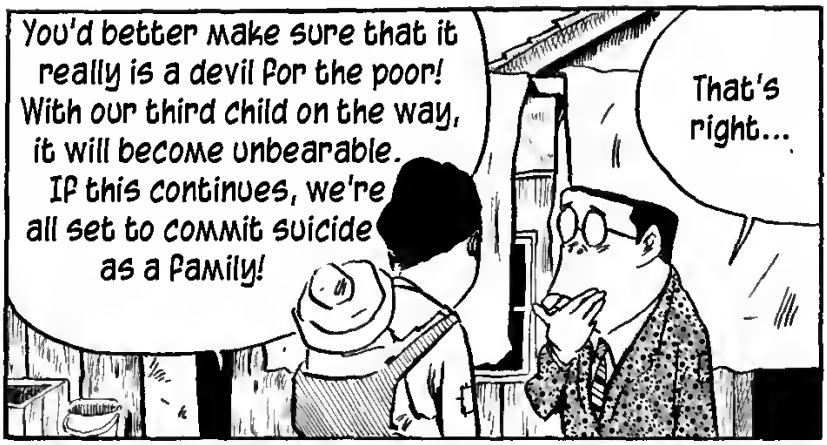

Oh yeah?
Give me a little time. I'll succeed soon enough!

Let's go eat something.
You're optimistic!


Hinko, I think I'll stop fighting against the god of poverty. I'm going to try to make him my ally, what do you think?

Idiot! How do you want us to get by, if you make friends with poverty?

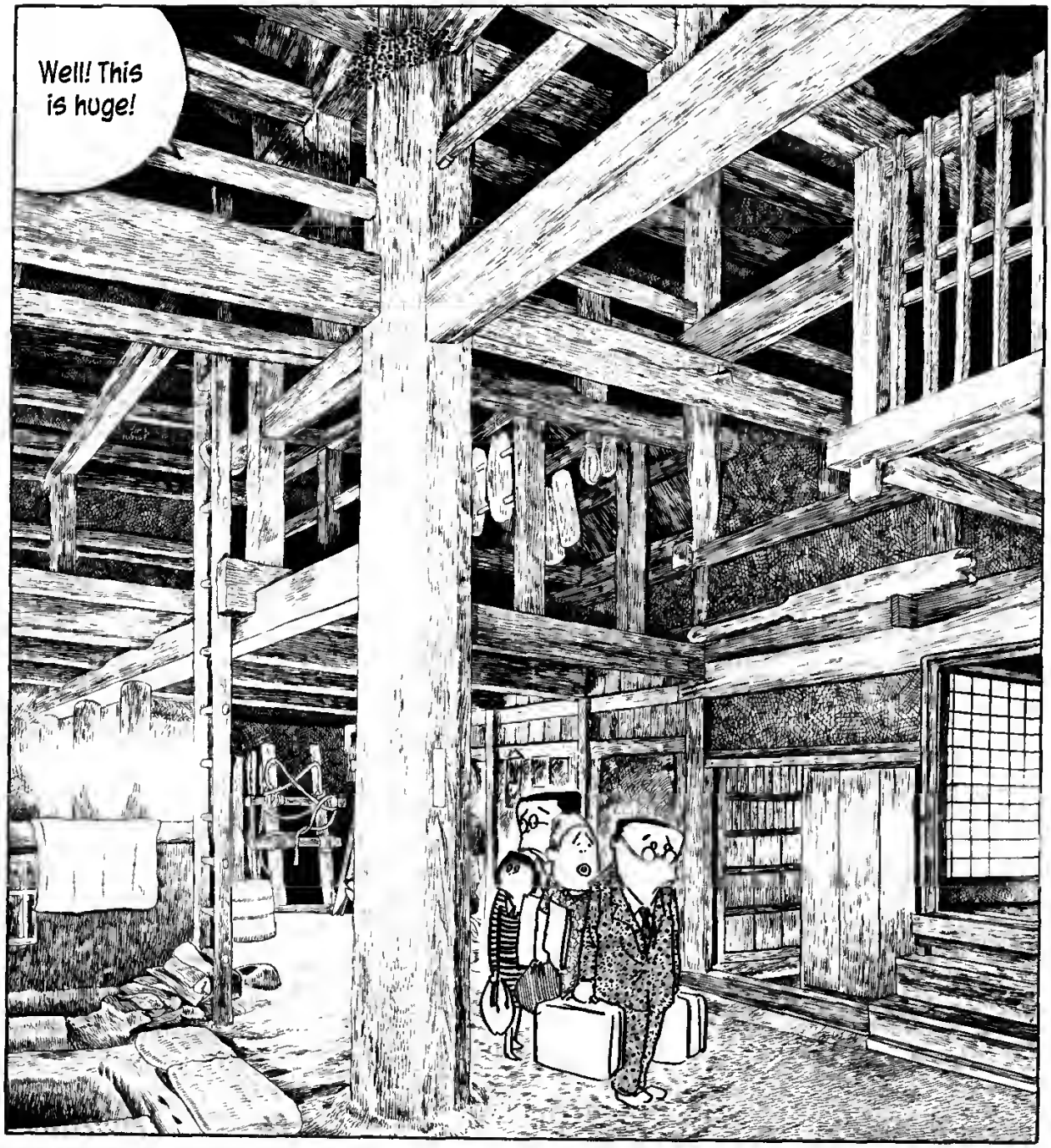

I finally got married and had children. But day after day, life became more difficult.
Even though I kept changing jobs, nothing worked.


You'd better make sure that it really is a devil for the poor! With our third child on the way, it will become unbearable. If this continues, we're all set to commit suicide as a family!
That's right...

* the "bom" in Bom-ei means "common", "mediocre."

Hi hi hi hi

Finally, a shaman told me that it wasn't any god of poverty, but rather a guardian angel of very low rank, that only some members of my family were able to see. If my son couldn't see it, that was because it wasn't yet at his side.


Well! This is huge!

It's the end.

And now... Twenty years here...

So... Only death separated us...
Now, I'll be with your son.
Donta, the time has come to leave one another.
But Bompei, there's no one there!
Who's that man, over there?
Humans aren't free. Everyone is manipulated by forces they can't comprehend.
This is weird... Am I the only one able to see him?
Hi hi hi hi

Notice!

This book is respecting the Japanese reading direction, you are here on the last page.

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